Monday, February 19, 1917

Last night I conducted, at Hunter College, a Forum under the auspices of the Inter-Varsity Menorah on the question Ethical Culture or Judaism - Which? There was quite a large attendance consisting for the most part of young men and women college students. To my surprise however all those who participated in the discussion displayed such limited ~~kx~~ understanding of the problem that I was not stimulated to fresh thought on the question. Most of those who favored Ethical Culture did so not because of the intrinsic merits of the movement but because of the delapidated condition of Judaism particularly Orthodoxy. Orthodox ~~xxxx~~ Judaism was roundly denounced for its filth and its lack of consideration for the young, and for its ceremonies. Here and there some arose in its defense. ~~xx~~ Practically no one as much as mentioned Reform Judaism as an alternative instead of Ethical Culture. I, therefore, infer that only from young men and women that came from old fashioned Jewish homes are the Menorah ranks recruited, a fact that I had occasion to observe every time I came in contact with Menorah men and women. It seems that the time is now ripe for a religious campaign among the Jewish students of the various high schools and colleges. I suspect that the cultural interests which the Menorah societies are seeking to foster are too weak to make any definite or positive impression upon their lives.

I am not sorry, however, that I consented to spend the evening with the Menorahs. I got more out of the preparation I had given to the meeting, expecting that it would develop into a real intellectual tussle, than out of the meeting itself. It gave me an opportunity to discover the weaknesses of the Ethical Culture movement to such a degree that I shall no longer look back with regret to my not having taken advantage of an Adler Scholarship that I could have gotten in 1903 upon the recommendation of Prof. Woodbridge. I often thought that if I had been drawn into the movement I might have been more spiritually satis-

fied than in Jewish work. Of course, I always felt there was something organically wrong with its philosophy as well as with its potentialities, but I was never so convinced as when I made a study of it the other week. I discovered that its principal weakness is that it darenot commit itself to a definite program of social reform, for fear of alienating those of its members who are so situated that they are interested in having the status quo maintained. I realized that it lacks the main essentials of a true cause that can fire the imagination and thrill the heart. It cannot evoke loyalty which is only possible when the group is organized on the basis either of common interests and a common history or of a definite object, such as socialism, world peace or woman suffrage.

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Wednesday, February 21, 1917

Last night I met for the first time a group of students of the Senior class at the Seminary who had asked me to guide them in their endeavor to do more intensive work than that which the Seminary gives them an opportunity to do. There has been of late among the students a far stronger feeling of dissatisfaction with the courses at the Seminary than ever before. Some of them have actually conceived the ambition to be more than mere salary takers when they graduate. They want to command the knowledge both Jewish and secular that will give their words weight and authority. They really want to be leaders in Jewish life As the Seminary is at present organized or rather unorganized, there is little likelihood of their attaining their object. I consider myself fortunate in having wom the confidence of the student body in general and of the leading spirits among them in particular. They have approached me with the request to help them carry out their plan. There were originally about ten who wanted me to do special work with them, but I thought it best to select only the six best for that purpose. They are Goldman, Metz, Kadushin, Mortimer Cohen, Baraway and Langé. They were chosen principally on the basis of personality and

to learn, although Goldman and Metz are perhaps the most scholarly among the present student body of the Seminary. We held a conference to decide what to do and we came to the conclusion that we must defer the more ambitious program of studies until the end of this term. In the meantime we decided to take up Talmud beginning at the rate of eight folios per week. I suggested Baba Bathra. Last night was our first session. It was conducted in Hebrew and the men expressed an earnestness and satisfaction that did my heart good. I had, in fact, contemplated telling them that I intended giving up doing work with them in order to start once for all writing on the Problem of Modern Judaism, but when I saw how they appreciated my interest in them I changed my mind.

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Thursday, Febraary 22, 1917

This morning Joseph H. Cohen called me up and told me that the Building Committee of the Jewish Centre was at his office taking a last look at the plans for final decision. I had been so used to such "final" decisions that I replied that the building plans were like a prima donna who was forever making her final appearance. He asked me to come anyhow I found Cohen, Vessel, Polstein, Phillips, Fischman and the architect, Abramson. They were not discussing the question concerning which they primarily wanted my adive, viz., the minimum number of classrooms, because by the time I arrived they had already decided that it would be more advisable to build an extra floor so as to get in five instead of three classrooms. Although it means an additional expense of about $15000 they would rather spend that additional amount, they said, than make the mistake of not providing enough room for growth. The plans have undergone a remarkable evolution since I last saw them. From a four story structure, they have now decided to have a nine story building on a most elaborate scale. It is surprising to see men whom one would judge as out and out materialists -- exdept Cohen and Fischman - spend so much time upon an undertaking that can bring them no material

advantage. Withal that I cannot help feeling that an institution of that kind will only help to accentuate the smug self complacency of the Jewish bourgeois who are to be affiliated with it, and that the prospects of their cultivating a larger vision and a deeper insight into the problems both of general and of Jewish life are very limited.

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Saturday night, February 24, 1917

I spoke this morning at Jacob Kohn's synagogue on 114 Street. My subject was "The Three Essential Needs of Jewish Life." In the account of the Tabernacle of the Wilderness we find that 1) Moses was forbidden to gather the various materials needed for the structure; 2) He was shown a pattern on the mount; 3) He was given detail directions as to how to organize the various materials. Likewise we need in order to make Jewish life possible 1) Development of content, of a literature that should reflect the spiritual life of the Jewry today as the Talmud did of Jewry in its time, as the codes, the philosophic and Cabbalistic literature each in its time. Furthermore we cannot afford to limit Jewish life to mere synagogue worship but must reintroduce activities analogous to those which made Jewish civil law possible. 2) A definite ideal of what Jewish life in the diaspora must be like; 3) Organization of the lesser bodies into one united Jewry -- in short content, a philosophy and organization.

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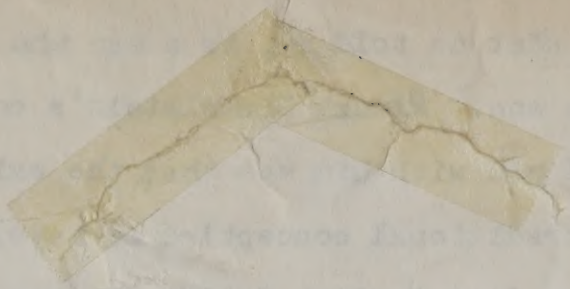
Monday, March 12, 1917

In the course of my conferences with Seminary students during the last two weeks I had occasion to learn of two men, Finkelstein and Harry Cohen, who are opposed to the attitude I take towards the Bible. Finkelstein is by far the more sensible of the two. I understand that he has wealthy relations and that he is therefore in a position to give all his time to study, instead of having to spend most of the time, as the other Seminary men do, giving lessons. His father

is a rabbi, and, from what he told me, is a man who holds far more liberal views than his son. ~~Finkelstein~~ Finkelstein's contention throughout a lengthy discussion I had with him was that the existence of Judaism is endangered if the traditional conception of revelation and miracle be denied. Harry Cohen is a foolish fellow who has never had any real intellectual training and who is studying for the ministry, as he himself said, because he can do nothing else. Both of these men are taking courses in Semitics at Columbia, their main ambition being to get a degree; whereas, if the authorities of the Seminary were to be sincere about graduating the proper kind of students, they would see to it that men like these should have some kind of grounding in the general problems of philosophy and the social sciences.

Last night there was a house dinner (in connection with Purim which was last Thursday) given at the Seminary. F. M. Warburg was the host. It was the second that was given this year. Schiff was present this time. After dinner was over he was called upon to speak. The principal point he made was that the alumni should make the orthodox Jews realize what good the Seminary is doing. The rest was palaver. Adler was toastmaster and having very little to say, wanted to introduce the precedent he had established at Dropsie College dinners of having no speaking. But when he called for a vote quite a number of the students voted in favor of speakers. Warburg spoke next. He called the attention of the students to the need of doing something for their respective communities in the way of social and philanthropic work and advised them to familiarize themselves with the courses given at the Jewish Communal School. Goldman, the chairman of the students' welfare committee, was called upon to speak, but said practically nothing. What he did say was in bad taste and Adler sailed into him afterwards. Friedlaender spoke in his usually easy manner about his old theme of the need of an "atmosphere" and would up by voicing the need of a dormitory which sentiment the students heartily applauded.



Adler parried afterwards by depicting a still vaster dream, as he called it. His sarcasm was intended to neutralize Frieldaender's plea for a dormitory.

Warburg asked me to go home with him in his automobile. He expressed keen dissatisfaction with the coldness and indifference the professors displayed towards the students during the evening. They passed them by, he said, as though they were so many dish towels. He was also poorly impressed by the behavior of some of the students who showed not the least sign of respect to the faculty and some of whom came in late.

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Tuesday, March 13, 1917

Benderly called me up a few minutes ago to tell me that the Federation of Charities finally admitted the principal Talmud Torahs of this city ~~xxxx~~ on the same basis as its constituent organizations of a philanthropic character. This is, to my mind, an epoch-making event in American Jewry. It has broken the back of the assimilationist tendency. The precedent which has been established will be followed by the Federations which about to be organized as well as by those which are already in existence. This means that collective Jewry will contribute towards Jewish education which will no longer have to depend entirely upon the handful of those who make the perpetuation of Judaism their own life purpose. The one man without whom such a development would never have ~~xxxx~~ taken place is Dr. Benderly. All honor to this most constructive genius in Jewish social life of the present time! Had it not been for his ability to gather data and present concrete facts as to Jewish education, who would have given the least attention to Jewish educational needs?

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Sunday, March 18, 1917

I was scheduled to lecture this morning at the Central Jewish Institute on Psalms. Having heard beforehand of the meagre attendance which these Sunday morning lectures attract, I was reluctant to prepare and did so only out of a sense of duty. When I got there this morning I found only a handful of people, of the kind who least need such a lecture. Without much hesitation I beat a retreat. This is, of course a trifling incident and I am almost ashamed to record it, in view of the great world events that are now taking place when the history of centuries is being crowded into days. Last Thursday the Russian Czar abdicated! A new heaven and a new earth seem to be shaping themselves. Nevertheless I cannot become oblivious to the pathetic struggle which our people is waging for existence and the pettiest incident is to me symptomatic of their struggle. To think that on a bright Sunday morning it should be possible to get together at least one hundred people to listen to a lecture on Psalms! If I had been scheduled to speak on a week day evening, I might have gotten a fairly good audience. But who would have constituted it? The same group of young "luft menschen" who are seen wherever anything Jewish goes on, the professional Jews. These are all engaged on a Sunday morning at their little jobs of trying to keep the fires of Jewish life from dying. Thus I was given a chance to see what Jewish life would look like without the few camp followers (of whom I am one) whose destiny it is to be kept away from the living interests of men.

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Monday, March 19, 1917

The leading spirits among the students of the Seminary are determined to have the curriculum of studies more in accord with their needs. They had two well attended meetings at which the men displayed great enthusiasm in giving expression to what they thought they ought to get at the Seminary. I understand that they alluded approvingly

to the work that I was doing with them. They finally decided to send a committee to Dr. Adler and in conference explain to him that they wanted two things, first the reorganization of the curriculum in such a way as to make the men prepare for each session, whereas now they content themselves with attendance at lectures, and secondly, a course on the problem of religion particularly insofar as it bears upon Judaism. The only one that would suit them for that course is myself. When the committee came to see Adler they put the request to him without mentioning my name. When they explained to them what kind of a new course they wanted, he put his left leg on his right leg, and sitting back, he drawled out the following: "You mean the thing they call social-psychology. You know I am a rebel. I don't believe in the whole business. There is no such thing as a psychology of the Jewish people. Any one that would undertake to teach such a subject is a charlatan."

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Friday, March 23, 1917

I spoke last night before the Columbia Menorah Society. There were only about thirty people present. Almost half the number were Seminary men. I understand that the Columbia Society, unlike those at other colleges, leads a rather precarious existence. Although it is just where one most expect a strong Menorah society Columbia has a large Jewish student body with sufficient leisure on their hands to devote to outside activities and with sufficient antisemitism to act as an incentive, this organization has fared very poorly. There is only one explanation. The Jewish spirit among the Jewish students there is at an ebb. I was convinced of this fact by the nature of the discussion that took place last night. The question was on The Conflict of Judaism with Modern Science. The discussion was led off by three Menorah members - Tannenbaum, Cohen and Gluck. The first of these has achieved notoriety as a I.W.W. leader. He led a rioting mob that broke into a church some time ago. Hearing him speak one would hardly believe him capable of

violence. But there seemed to be something about him that betrayed a certain degree of personal power. He spoke a very fine English but with an accent that sounded very foreign at times. He told his religious biography, of his having learned Talmud with his grandfather before he was thirteen. When he arrived at that age or not much later, he said, he "parted company with God." This was about the only vile expression he used. The rest he spoke in a simple and unassertive manner. He analyzed religion into two elements theological and ethical and showed the inadequacy of both. He ended up by saying "I don't know and I don't care about religious truth. Why bother about conjectural worlds and beings when there is so much work to be done in a real world with all its joys and sufferings. Gluck spoke in the same vein. In my summing up I stated that I accepted the "I don't know," but that I took exception to the attitude of "I don't care." I went so far as to deny that there was any such thing as religion or Judaism. There have been for a long time Jews with a particular mode of life without the term religion or Judaism. The mode of life has not been something fixed and unalterable. The real problem that should concern us is not what "religious" truth to uphold as what to do with and for the Jews whose moral wellbeing depends upon the maintenance of the collective entity of the Jewish people.

But of what significance are my words or my views in the face of the rapid dissolution of the Jewish cause that is taking place with ever hastening speed? How can one have the heart to prevent people from escaping a ship that is on fire?

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Sunday, April 1, 1917

Last Thursdany night I participated in the formal opening exercises of the Communal School for Jewish Work. There were eleven speakers; each one was supposed to speak ten minutes. The whole thing

sounded like a series of after-dinner speeches without the dinner. As is usual with me on after-dinner occasions I was very stiff and stilted in my remarks which is usual with me whenever I find that what I have to say is out of gear with the tenor of the other addresses. All the others rattled off their glib platitudes about cooperation with the School. Unfortunately I am absolutely unable to repeat platitudes. My memory simply rebels against them. The exercises as a whole, however, hardly deserve mention because they were simply a kind of show staged for general entertainment.

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Thursday, April 12, 1917

On Tuesday night, April 4, I met a number of people at the house of Mr. & Mrs. Sylvan Robison for the purpose of presenting to them the plan of a Zionist Synagogue that is to meet the Jewish spiritual needs of the modern man. I cannot call this as yet a venture because I have so far done very little towards realizing the plan that I have in mind. I was led to put the matter before the gathering through the acquaintance I have formed with the Robisons. Mrs. Robison joined my class at Teachers College at the beginning of this year. She seems to be rather an intelligent woman. She is a Wellsely graduate and was a high-school teacher. Her early associations were entirely unjewish. She got most of her early religious training in a Protestant Sunday School. When she married Mr. Robison she was led by him to take an interest in Jewish life. He exerted this influence upon her through his Zionism. He is an ardent Zionist worker. In the course of my discussions in Teachers College I had occasion to express my dissatisfaction with the synagogue as it is constituted at present. This met with a response in her. She together with her husband had been trying out one synagogue after another only to find them dissapointing. They were members of Jacob Kohn's congregation and latterly have been affiliated

with 70th Street Congregation to which they were drawn by the presence of Poole. But nowhere have they found what they wanted. When, therefore, I suggested the need of a new type of synagogue, she was very much interested and told her husband about it. He then came to see me and suggested that I meet a group of his friends and try to interest them in my project.

There were about thirty people present equally divided between me and women. Besides the Robisons there were Dr. & Mrs. Sobel, Mr. and Mrs. Adlerbloom, Mrs. Guggenheimer and her daughter, Mr. & Mrs. Fromenson, Mr. Witte and two of his sons, Mr. Segal, Mr. Elisha Friedman and Laurie Crohn and a few others. Dr. Friedman, the brother of Elisha had intended to come but was called away. I was more interested in the presence of Dr. Sobel than in that of any one else there. His wife is a very able and energetic woman, but seems to have an overdose of religion in her makeup, whereas he is an ordinary matter of fact physician who as a result of his training looks upon religion with a great deal of suspicion. They have a son by the name of Irwin who is gifted in many ways and who will probably develop into a very unique personality. He is primarily the product of a carefully considered bringing up. That he got entirely from his mother who has her entire being wrapped up in him. She has been devoting so much time and energy to Jewish work, to Zionism, Hadassah, etc. that Dr. Sobel begain to feel that her Jewishness with which he had never strongly sympathized, was robbing him of her companionship and he gradually began to grow resentful of her undue interest in Jewish affairs. His disgust with Judaism grew more intense the more she would insist upon his conforming to this or that observance. Finally the matter went so far that for nearly two months they did not exchange a word with each other. What must have angered him even more was that Irwin so far has been ranging himself on his mother's side.

Now when Mr. Robison was making arrangements for the meeting that was to take place at his house he went to see Dr. Sobel hoping to interest him. He refused to have anything to do with the undertaking. Robison wrote to him but he did not even reply. A few days before the meeting he told Irwin to tell his mother that he would not come. Upon her replying that she would not go either, they got into a discussion of the cause of the trouble between them. They talked away for hours. In the course of the discussion she took occasion to tell him some of the ideas I had been giving in my course. He seemed to change his attitude entirely when he heard what views I held. A reconciliation was effected and he promised her to come to the meeting.

I understood that he was fully in accord with my plan and it looks as if I would have no difficulty in making an adherent of him. Of course he is only one of thousands of people whose earlier religious training was so crude that it has repelled them from Judaism. In a cheder to which he went the "rebi" would take away from the boys the apples that they had brought for themselves. The cat-oninetails was an ever present menace, and was wielded mercilessly when the ire of the "rebi" was aroused. It is pitiful to see how despite all that has been done to repel them they still have a hankering for the faith of their fathers, a hankering that often finds expression in the most unexpected manner. This Dr. Sobel who is apparently of the non-religious type and an assimilationist, not only abstains from leavened bread on Passover, but being a first born is most scrupulous about attending services on Erev Pesach so as to become legally exempt from the duty of fasting on that day. Such are some of the freakish outbreaks of a repressed religiosity.

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Saturday night, April 28, 1917

On Monday, April 2, and on the Monday following, I delievered the two lectures in the course given at the Central Jewish Institute

under the auspices of the Jewish Communal School. The first lecture was entitled "Religion and Modern Life," and the second "Adjustment of Jewish Life to the American Environment."

Both of these lectures I worked over carefully into the lecture on "The Need for a Scientific Bases for the Adjustment of Jewish Religion to Modern Life " which I had been scheduled to deliver before the Rabbinical Association of Chicago on Tuesday, April 17.

I got to Chicago on Tuesday, April 17 at 9:45 A.M. I was met at the station by Rabbi Samuel Cohen who has been engaged by the United Synagogue and the Seminary to do some field work. He was going to take me to the house of Mrs. Stone with whom Dr. Stolze had made arrangements to have me stop at her home during my stay in Chicago. I did not want, however, to be late to the morning conference and we sent directly to the club house -- the Standard Club where the meetings of the Association were to take place that day. The morning session was devoted to a round table discussion led by Emil Hirsch on the problem of the synagogue. There were present about thirty people, half of them women. Hirsch started out by quoting Löw to the effect that all times was there complaint of religious laxity and indifference. But in the course of his remarks he led up to a picture of the present which was rather disheartening. I was struck by the cleamess of his analysis up to a certain point when as it seemed both habit and prejudice interposed to make clear thinking impossible. The discussion that followed was scattered and inane. Elfenbein, a Seminary graduate who holds a position in Chicago was particularly successful in making a fool of himself. In a strident voice he protested strongly against what Hirsch said about the Sabbath having become defunct.

Luncheon was served in the club rooms. Dr. Stolz who is president of the Association urged me to stay saying the he had purposely arranged a "milchding" lunch so that I should be able to eat together with them. I yielded. I was placed at the head of the table

alongside of Hirsch. Some little distance away was David Neumark of Cincinnati. I did not find the conversation very brilliant or the lunch appetizing.

There were between sixty and seventy people present when I read my paper. I was listened to with a great deal of attention and was heartily applauded at the conclusion. The questions and criticisms were far below those that one might expect from rabbis. I was particularly dumfounded by Neumark's long winded and comical dissertation that called forth much laughter and ridicule from the listeners. He objected to my general point of view on the ground that psychology and sociology were too flimsy to furnish the basis for the problem of religion. When Hirsch was called upon to make some comments he spoke of my paper as lucid and stimulating, and gave an eloquent rendering of the main points I advanced. He expressed himself quite strongly in sympathy with my contention that Judaism must at present resolve itself into Palestinianism and Americanism. My address and his comments were made the subject of the main editorial next day in the Iddish daily, the "Courier."

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Sunday, April 29, 1917

I had supper at Mrs. Stone's. She impressed me as a woman of more than the average intelligence. She came to this country from Russia as a young girl. She is married to a dull obese good natured and successful business man and has a well regulated Jewish home. The Jewishness which is practically little more than of the kitchen kind, seems to be due to a surviving mother that stays with them rather than to any profound convictions of Mrs. Stone's. As far as her husband and children are concerned the last vestige of Jewishness might as well have disappeared altogether. She seems to be influential with the upper Jewish circles in Chicago and I have a suspicion that there is something of the social climber in her. Her friends tell her, she

said, that since she has begun to mingle with the "Deitschen" she has been growing lax in her observances. There was a time not so long ago when she would not eat trefa nor ride in a car on the Sabbath. Now she finds it impossible to abstan from trefa outside of her home, because of her social contact with people who do not observe the dietary laws. Not long ago she celebrated her silver wedding. She had intended to have it strictly kosher. But the week preceding the celebration a very intimate friend of hers died. When she started making preparations for the silver wedding she found that it was altogether too late for kosher catering. She therefore called in a caterer who furnished her with a regular trefa banquet. How else, she asked me, could she done under the circumstances? Could she have allowed the many distinguished guests she had awaited to be served with cold sandwiches? Rabbi Silver did not forgive her for having given a trefa banquet in her own home. But when she asked Dr. Judelson her spiritual guide, he found no fault with her.

I met this Dr.Judelson at supper. He is a man in the early forties, small in stature, of square build, quite gray and has an intelligent open face expression. He was a rabbi of the congregation to which Mrs. Stone belongs until l ast year when he gave up the rabbinate for the profession of medicine. Apparently he was not altogether happy in the ministry because he felt himself spiritually cramped. That underlying his antipathy to sanctimonious religiosity there is a deep love for things Jewish may be inferred from the interest which he still displays toward the Jewish educational and social institution maintained for the most part by members of his former congregation. During the day and a half of my stay in Chicago he was with me three times and saw me off to the train. What wonder that I warmed up to the man!

The next day I had dinner at Mrs. Davis', a daughter of Samuel Hillel Isaacs. Isaacs was among the early Russian arrivals to this country. He possessed a remarkable degree of Haskalah which instead of shaking his religious fidelity had the effect of confirming him in it. Father (זצ"ל) took me to see him not long after we came to this country. Isaacs was at that time a man of about sixty. I did not come in contact with the man until I was called to pulpit of the Kehilath Jeshurun in 1903. He lived quite poorly in a small flat. He seemed to be perfectly contented. In his earlier years he made his living by teaching privately. When I met him in 1903 he devoted his time to study and writing. He was interested in calendar making and similar researches. Not long after my coming to the Kehilath Jeshurun Synagogue he moved to Chicago where he was cared for by his daughter, Mrs. Davis. He died about three months ago at the age of 84.

Her main interest in inviting me to dinner was to get my opinion on a small ms. left by her father. It deals with the ancient coundaries of the Land of Israel according to Numbers and Ezekiel. She showed me various letters from different authorities all of whom practically were discouraging in tone, because of the uncritical assumption underlying the treatment that the passage in Numbers is historical. She wanted to know my opinion. Glancing at the ms. I saw at once that it had no genuine value except as interpretation of an illusion and I was critically frank in my opinion about it.

In the conversation at table as well at various other times during my short visit, I was impressed with the growing number among our people of adherents to Christian Science.

Dr. Switton, superintendent of the Orthodox Home for the aged arranged to have me take supper at his institution and to have a number of people meet me there at that time. I know Switton from my student days at the Seminary. In the chaos which prevailed in those days at 736 Lexington Avenue his status was an uncertain one-at times he

appeared as a teacher and at times a student, and in reality he was a boarder. Those were the days when Jaffe called himself our mother, when Drachman was our dean, when Jaffe would make us attend his lessons at six in the morning and Drachman would fall asleep over his Episcopalian commentary of the Bible at three in the afternoon. When I think of those precious years wasted in idleness I grow bitter. It was at that time that a good looking young man, dark complexioned, rather stoutish with a small pointed black beard appeared on the scene to disappear ~~kx~~ a short while thereafter. Only recently he came to see me in New York about a man for a rabbinical position in Chicago. He showed himself very friendly to me during my stay in Chicago.

In the evening I addressed a meeting that had been arranged for me by Rabbi Sam M. Cohen in the interests of the Seminary. There were present about fifty people. I spoke for over an hour on the subject ~~xSpxkkk~~ "Spiritual Leadership in Judaism." About thirty pledged themselves to become members of a Seminary branch that would be organized in Chicago.

Last Sunday, April 22 I participated in the exercises of the League of Jewish Youth which held its first mass meeting at the Century Theatre. The League is one of Benderley's creations for the purpose of holding the Jewish adolescents/ boy and girl to their Jewish affiliations. His aides have been at work upon the organization of the League for over a year. As far as I can see they have succeeded only in outward organization but have not been able to do very much to develop a soul or uniting spirit among the young people. There were about two thousand young people, mostly girls. Very elaborate programs were printed for the occasion. The singing was good and the whole performance went through without a hitch. The whole affair was well staged. The young people in the orchestra and galleries and the visitors of whom there were about two hundered on the stage. But after all it struck me as

being little more than what B. himself called it, a show. The pity of it is that the show succeeded to such a degree that instead of devoting his energy to intensifying the work with the young people he began the next day to dream about a more huge show to take place next Hanukah at Madison Square Garden.

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Tuesday, May 22, 1917

This morning at 8:30 I participated in the ceremony of ground breaking of the Jewish Center on the West Side. It was to me a thrilling experience to watch the Italian laborers hauling the heavy derricks and getting the machinery ready to start building, while the passersby were hurrying to their shops and offices entirely unmindful of the spiritual significance of what we were doing. It could never have occurred to them that the ancient spirit of Israel was once again seeking a foothold in the modern world despite the huge peace and war activities and interests that are threatening to crowd it out. The few men who have made the Jewish Center possible and who were on the grounds were at that moment simply obeying a mysterious impulse within them which has been driving them on to make every effort to perpetuate the life of Israel. Do they themselves realize the nature and the direction of this impulse? Perhaps one or two among them. But it makes no difference. They are the tools of a will not their own and higher than their own.

I quoted in connection with the ceremony the following - וגו׳ ויחצבו
את הבירה הגדולה אשר לה׳ אלהים בנוי לה׳

and pointed out that it was not only a foundation that was being laid but a well that was being dug, a fountain of new and inexhaustible energy for living the Jewish life.

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Thursday, June 28, 1917

Last night I spoke at the Y.M.H.A. at a meeting which had been arranged by the director to urge the young men to go willingly when they will be drafted. Judge Lehman presided but did not say anything. Mayor Mitchel was the principal speaker. I was surprised to see quite a poor attendance for a meeting of that character despite the fact that it had been heavily advertised and the Mayor himself was to speak. The audience was rather apathetic. The Mayor spoke the regular clap trap about the war being a contest between autocracy and democracy and wound up by a threat that if the men do not volunteer they will stand little chance of being exempted from the draft.

In my remarks I dwelt upon the idealism which is at the bottom of America's entry into the war, notwithstanding the selfish motives that may have actuated those who had invested a great deal of wealth in the Allies. This is a righteous war. Every war that our country fought had its detractors. The ideal for which we are fighting is to suppress the great bully and outlaw among the nations - the German government. Let us not delude ourselves by saying that it is no affair of ours. As long as wrong and injustice will obtain in the relations between nation and nation there is no likelihood of justice and law being established in the relations between one individual and another. The reason the fight against moral evil in human life has so far made but little headway is that moral evil has always been condoned in the higher circles or in the larger relations of mankind.

It is true that the Allies have been no lee guilty of employing force to advance their purposes. But they have at least the saving grace of not raising to a principle the violence that they may have committed. Converting hate and lawlessness into a philosophy is Germany's distinctive trait. We Jews ought to know because we have been the victims of it. We had been hated and persecuted for centuries

but it was not before Germany came and called it antisemitism that Jew hatred became a philosophy.

As Jews, furthermore, we owe it to America to stand by her in her hour of trial. מ. שלא פיתתו פיתתו לתגבל בפלוחתא חייבא לה. (מגבל ותחומה שמתה)

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Monday, July 16, 1917

My family left for Long Branch on Tuesday, June 26. I am trying the plan of staying in New York during the week and going out to Long Branch only week-ends. Although I generally managed to do work when I stayed in Long Branch in past years, I always felt lost because I did not have the facilities to keep in touch with modern discussions of mooted problems in religion, nor would I have any one to converse with concerning these problems. Now that I have adopted a different plan of spending the summer I am no less restive than before. I feel mentally disorganized. Some of the things I have been at work on seem to have run to seed. And no matter how hard I am trying to pull myself together I do not succeed. I am very much disconcerted by the headway which reaction is making in Jewish life in this country. The advent of a young man by the name of Revel has given a new lease of life to the narrow minded bigotry that prevents Judaism from adjusting itself to modern thought and life. He is possessed of a good memory and had a good Talmudic training from his early youth. He married into a very rich and extremely orthodox family - the Travises. He has an independent income and is extrmely ambitious to assume leadership of orthodoxy in this country. If I am to rely on rumer he is quite unscrupulous and no respecter of the truth. He has been able to gather around him not only the "old guard" butalso some young men who either sincerely or insincerely play the part of protagonists of orthodoxy. His official position is that of president of the faculty of the Yeshibath Elhanan. In that capacity he has been able to secure for it larger

funds than it had ever commanded. He is very determined and aggressive in his purpose to outdo the Seminary by sending out graduates for whom the claim is made of being Talmudists. This entire movement resembles on a small scale that of the Jeuits who have saved Catholicism from imminent dissolution. The Seminary, on the other hand, instead of emphasizing the difference between the position taken by it and that of orthodoxy truckles to that very element which is daily growing more pugnacious and self-confident in its opposition to the Seminary.

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Friday, July 27, 1917

The Jewish community of this country, particularly the orthodox wing, lost two staunch champions this month. One is Rabbi Samuel Margolis, son of Rabbi M. Z. Margolis; the other is Samuel I. Hyman. The former died as a result of an accident which he incurred while driving an automobile. I came in very little direct contact with him. All I remember of him personally is what I saw of him while he was a student of the Seminary for a short time in 1903. I recall that I then learned with surprise of his father having sent him for a number of years to study in the Russian Yeshibah, an ideal that my father, of blessed memory, had always entertained with regard to me.

He was never graduated from the Seminary. He became rabbi in Cleveland about seven or eight years ago. He was an indefatigable worker and a very good speaker in Yiddish. He took an interest in social and philanthropic endeavor and succeeded in achieving an extraordinary degree of popularity. The Zionist cause was championed by him with remarkable vigor and he at one time even challenged to a debate on the question of Zionism, Baker who was then mayor of Clevland and is now secretary of War. That he must have possessed unusual strength of character is evidenced by the calmness and resignation with which he met death and gave directions to his father as to the Jewish bringing up of his children. He also urged that in place of holding

a large funeral the money that would have been spent for that purpose should be devoted to the establishment of a Talmud Torah.

His body was brought to New York on Monday July 9th. I was among those who spoke at the 85 St. synagogue where the funeral was held.

The death of Sam I. Hyman undoubtedly leaves a gap in the Jewish communal life of this city that will not be readily closed. Nothing less than an indomitable will like his could have made the Arverne Synagogue and the Jewish Central Institute possible. And he was only at the beginning of his career as a worker for the Jewish cause.

In the funeral address which I delivered at the Arverne Synagogue on Friday, July 13, I pointed out that the one great passion of his life was to take Judaism across the poverty line. I also drew a parallel between his character and that of Nehemiah.

I am floundering again. The attempt to do many things at the same time and the failure to bring any of them to a finish has a very depressing effect on me. The fact that I undertook to preach during the coming year both at the 85 Street Synagogue and at the new Jewish Centre on West 86 Street weighs like a burden on my mind. I am trying hard to cast off that burden, but I find myself totally helpless in the face of what the leaders of these two organizations regard as a claim upon me. The fear of being completely submerged in the crowd impels me to yield to their demand.

Last Tuesday I spent the afternoon with Professor Davidson of the Seminary. He showed me the various pieces of work upon which he was engaged and crowed with delight over a discovery he had made immediately before I came. He discovered the name of the author of a "project" that he was at work on.

I laid before him an outline of my views upon Judaism. He was in complete agreement with them and urged very strongly that I write them out in book form.

Yesterday I had a visit paid me by Miss Seligsberg. She is an unmarried woman in the forties. She has quite an interesting spiritual history as unfolded in her article in this year's convention number of the Maccabean. She is in search of certainties as to the beyond and the hereafter, and is probably very much disappointed in my not being able to help her in that direction.

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Wednesday, August 29, 1917

On August 5 I participated in the exercises of the cornerstone laying of the Jewish Center. Jos. H. Cohen acted as chairman, and called upon me to give what he designated the keynote address of the occasion. The following is the resume of what I said:

The occasion should be devoted to the further clarification of the ideal which is about to be embodied in brick and mortar. The Jewish Center is intended to fill a want that has not been experienced hitherto, and is therefore to be different from any of the institutions with which we are apt to class it.

We don't want the Jewish Center to be a rich men's club, with a religious chapel in one part of the building to whitewash the consciences which are apt to become soiled in the other parts of the building. Nor do we want to get "even" with those of our gentile neighbors who do not consider our company good enough. Such a purpose would raise the sulks to the dignity of a religion.

Neither do we want merely to establish a house of worship. There are plenty of synagogues within easy walking distances that are more than half empty.

Our aim is to come to grips boldly and effectively with the question which we can no longer afford to ignore, the question as to

the future of the Jews in this country. The statisticians are certain that there is no future for Judaism in this country. The Zionists are the only Jews who realize the danger. They are doing all they can to prevent the disappearance of the Jews by striving to obtain for the Jewish people a legally secured homeland. But even the most sanguine among them cannot fail to see that it is a big gamble whether their hope can meet with realization in the near future. In the meantime the Jews are likely to be absorbed by their environment. To make sure that the soldier will reach the base hospital alive you need a field hospital. Jewish centers are to Palestine what a field hospital is to a base hospital.

We have established a Jewish Center that shall enable us to live together as Jews, because living together as Jews is an indispensible condition to Jewish religion. Before we can have Judaism we must have Jewishness. Those who believe that all that should unite Jews in their religion would have us be like the flowers cut from their bushes to make up a bouquet and deposited in a water-filled vase. Before long the water evaporates and the flowers fade and are scattered. We prefer to be like the flowers on the bush. Even when our day has come and we fall from the stem of life, it is to enrich the soil in which the bush is rooted. We want to create a Jewish environment that shall possess a social prestige of its own, so that our sons and daughters instead of straying into the non-Jewish environment will attract others to the Jewish environment (the last thought I did not express quite as definitely as stated here.)

Our desire to maintain the integrity of our collective life is prompted not by race pride, but by the desire to conserve and develop the ideals that we have given to the world. Jewish religion is as dependent upon the existence of a Jewish social atmosphere as music is upon the instrument that renders it. The Jewish group is the harp which has yielded those magic accords of divine music which has thrilled

the soul of mankind. Hitherto we deplored the fact that the harp was hung upon the willows; henceforth we might have to deplore the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ fact that its frame is cracking, its strings are wilting so that it is on the point of being wrecked altogether.

Should it be said that in attempting to create a Jewish atmosphere in the land we are attempting the impossible, our answer is that therein lies our strength. So far the law which has made itself manifest in Jewish life has been that the spirit can create its own environment and mould itsown habitat. This power of the spirit over physical obstacles which man has shown whenever he has levelled mountains or joined oceans or harnessed the forces of nature, the Jew has carried a point farther, by transforming even human environment to conform to his spiritual needs. This power of creating a suitable environment is referred to by the prophet כל אבן ינשא וכל הכר יעבו . This truth gives point to a cornerstone laying ceremony at which the thought advanced was the same as the one we are urging today אי אתם הכרתיכון ושמני יעבו Hence the deduction לוא בחיל ולוא בכוח יעבו.

I was followed by H. Pereira Mendes and Judah L. Magnes. Cohen then called upon Fischman to lay the cornerstone, but to the surprise of all present Fischman who is the president of the organization explained that under no circumstances whould he consent to accept that honor. The only man who had a right to lay the cornerstone was Cohen, since he was the one to whose inspiration the Center owed its coming into existence. Cohan was overcome for a moment with emotion and so ~~xxxxx~~ were we all. It was this little scene that gave to the entire ceremony a warmth and a color seldom displayed at functions of this kind.

On Saturday, August 25, 1917 I preached at the Long Branch Synagogue. Taking as my text the words ולא ורצה זאת כנו יעבו I based the

sermon on the principle What one gets out of religion depends upon what one brings to it. (סוכה מ"ב ע"א) אם תאמר בינו תאמר קיבלנו

Introd. The manifestation of the divine, instead of being regarded in the same way as the ancients regarded the lightning, - as something unusual and to be dreaded - should be thought of in the same way as we now think of electricity. It should be regarded as possessing laws of its own which, if recognized, can enable us to experience the manifestation of the divine at all times.

The law that what we get out of religion, etc. is a psychic principle which is true of every phase of human experience. It is true in art, in travel, in the appreciation of nature, etc. Why then should we expect that as soon as we enter the synagogue after having kept aloof from it for a great length of time we should be inspired with the value and purpose of its activities? The same is true of our attitude toward the ceremonies.

This principle throws a great deal of light upon the question as to what should be the relation of religion to state. A religion from which all economic, social and political interests are divorced remains empty of all content and soon loses its hold upon the men and the heart.

This principle therefore enables us to get at the root of the evil, which prevails nowadays, of removing from the synagogue all charitable and educational activities that were formerly regarded as its main function. Nowadays the synagogue is primarily interested in meeting its annual budget. It isn't the $1000 that the congregation finds itself behind in that matters, but the 1000 years in which it is behind as far as reckoning with the new requirements of the age.

I then alluded to the fact that "the month of Ellul is a season of spiritual preparation so that we shall not come empty handed before God when the ימים נוראים arrive. הלו יאמרים דקמיך ניקו I urged upon the men to read the bible or some other serious book in-

stead of playing cards all the time that they are at lesiure, and the women I also asked to do less talking about the price of potatoes and onions and gasoline to the rythm of the rocking chair and to take up reading now and then a chapter from the Bible.

Following the laying of the cornerstone of the Jewish Center I have been thrown in very frequently with Joseph H. Cohen and Fischman. We take lunch very frequently together at the Waldorf. As soon as Cohen enters the dining room the waiters recognize him and try to meet his wishes in every way so that neither he nor his guests should feel in the least embarassed in washing, making the /c·3/n and saying grace after meals. Every time we eat together, we "bentch" with /n/3n A good many of the cloak manufacturers come to eat there at the same time, and a great part of the conversation among those at our table turns upon their business. In the interstices of the conversation the "center" is discussed, but very seldom with that concern and concentration that is characteristic of them when they talk "shop."

On one occasion Cohen asked me what I knew about Christian Science. He said he was very much interested in it, because it seemed to have a remarkably large following for a young movement, and to appeal to men and women of intellectual bent of mind. He would himself have gone to the services and healers in order to get at the secret of its success, but he refrained because people would say that he went to be cured of his asthma. He wanted me, therefore, to find out what good there was to Christian Science that might be grafted upon the stem of Jewish life.

He also had an idea that the Center should not confine itself to holding the services prescribed by our ritual. "Why not have, " he said, "the people come together once or twice a week to take part in devotional readings in the vernacular? The service prescribed by ritual we have to participate in as Jews. But why not satisfy our inner spiritual longings that cannot find expression in a language which no one

understands?" To hear him speak in this vein somewhat surprised me at first, though pleasantly, I must admit. It made me feel that there were great possibilities of spiritual growth both in Cohen and in the Center. When he suggested both radical ideas to Fischman - that of adopting the good in Christian Science and having devotional gatherings - the latter readily assented. When he asked me my opinion I told him that while I certainly agreed with him he would not grasp the full meaning of my acquiescence unless he would first get from me a comprehensive view of the religious problem in general, and of the particular phase of it which concerns us as Jews. He has first to learn the a-b-c of religion.

Cohen then suggested that we come together one or two evenings a week to discuss religion. Fischman, who is extremely fond of Cohen and is anxious about his health, suggested that the three of us go somewhere for a few days where we might discuss these subjects without having the strain of business on their minds. We finally decided to go to Tannersville.

Last Friday morning (Aug. 24) Cohen and his brother Louis, Fischman and myself left for Tannersville. We no sooner pulled out from the station than I was called upon to open the discussion (see outline). I was very glad that Louis Cohen joined us, because he is a much more matter-of-fact person than his brother and he made no secret of his conception of religion as good enough for children. It had nothing to offer, he said, as far as the adult is concerned. By this challenge he elicited from me more thought than if I were to have had all my statements accepted forthwith.

Had not Cohen's illness marred the pleasure of our few days' stay I would have put down those few days as the most enjoyable I spent in a good many years. Change of place, of company and an opportunity to converse on the subject nearest my heart contributed toward the delightful time I had in Tannersville.

As soon as we arrived at the hotel we caught sight of Hyamson engaged in conversation with a young fellow who belongs to his synagogue. Without having overheard wht they had to say I can make a sure guess that they talked about the weather, the food or some such subject. We no sooner greeted him than he told us of his having to go to Washington to the conference called by Hoover. When he got the circular letter about preaching the need of conserving food, he went out of his way to make some suggestions as to how the campaign might be carried on. This probably accounts for his being asked to come to the conference in Washington. It is certainly too trifling a matter to make mention of, but he elaborated upon the fact of his receiving the invitation to Washington to such a degree that it was evident that he was bent upon giving himself an air of importance.

He is a strange specimen and it is with difficulty that one can tell how to take him. His principal virtue is his harmlessness. He is a man in the fifties, very easy going, and never so happy as when he is not bothered with questions and difficulties. He is not tall and has a stooping gait which is quick and jerky at times. His face is deeply furrowed, of dark leathery hue. He has a prominent nose, and a thick short round beard covers what looks like a lantern jaw. He is nearsighted and sputters whenever he says a word with "br" and "pr." His main weakness is his wife. She takes very good care of him and he always addresses her in the presence of people as Dolly dear, occasionally pinching her arm, which act calls forth from her the remark "Don't pinch me!" Whenever he tries to tell a story which she knows, she always corrects him and then tells it over again in her own words. She has a face like a full moon when it is about twenty degrees from the horizon. Her chief care in life is that the rabbi should receive his checks in time. She is forever inculcating in her husband the virtue of doing nothing except for pay. She is probably responsible for that professional affability with which he greets every one with a loud "How are

you, my friend", regardless whether the one he so greets is a grown up person, a child or John, the colored porter in the Seminary. The Seminary boys quote him as having said once in a lecture the following: "Now my friends, bear in mind that you must treat every one kindly, If the telephone rings at night, and you are called to say 'Vidui' with a dying person, however inclement the weather, do not hesitate to go. It makes no difference whether the person is a member or not. For, if he is himself not a member, he may be a member's relative." His general mental attitude is largely reflected in the episcopal garb which he wears both winter and summer. I heard him preach once that we must believe in the restoration of sacrifices. One cannot get angry at him because he is most of the time apologetic and never aggressive. "A fool" is what people outside of his congregation as a rule call him when they hear his talk and observe his actions.

Last Friday night after we were through with the meal Hyamson and the four of us that came together got talking about the lack of the Sabbath spirit in the hotel. Instead of deploring the conditions, Hyamson found one reason after another for minimizing the seriousness of the situation. He proclaimed himself ever and anon as an optimist. When we walked away from the hotel, he went with Cohen and Fisman and I followed him. I berated him to Fischman for his optimism and Fischman thoroughly agreed with me. Nevertheless I felt guilty of having talked against an older colleague, behind his back, and I sought to make amends with myself. I seized the opportunity to do so as soon as we gathered again on the porch. Hyamson launched out once again on his private topic of the wonderful New York air and London fogs. Impatiently I broke in and said Why talk about such general topics when we ought to be discussing some topic of Jewish interest. From this point on I delievered myself of a tirade against Hyamson's negligence in doing nothing to prevent such godless spectacles as that of the hotel crowd on Friday night. Not a table had the candles lit. At one table, at

the most, were the kiddush and grace recited. In reply Hxxx Hyamson admitted that the hotel owner, Mr. Jacobson, ought to have bought little china candlesticks. Instead of considering this religious apathy as a symptom of a widespread spiritual malady that nothing less than the most radical measures will be able to cure, he was able to grasp only the immediate and outward in the particular evil which I pointed out to him. He would have impressed me as an altogether too small a man to be worth while talking about, if he had not ended his remarks with an unqualified admission that he was negligent. His humility is his saving grace. As he put it, when as a boy he was given the mitzvah of opening the ark, he refused to accept it because he did not regard himself good enough to deserve it.

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Friday, August 31, 1917

The following is the outline of the conversations I conducted with Cohen and Fischman on the meaning of religion in general and Judaism in particular.

Introd: Mind-picture of physical universe as contrasted with mind-picture entertained by the ancients

1. Altered conception of God
   a. Ancient conception - anthropomprphic
   b. Modern conception - psychic - mind force
      Suggested definition - God= that aspect of mind which gives one the courage to live.

2. Implications of modern conception of God - analogy of lightning and electricity.
   a. God manifest everywhere and at all times
   b. God manifest in different degrees in different objects, persons and collectivities.
   c. Religion should concern itself primarily with such knowledge of the relation of mind to body as enables one to achieve the supremacy of the spirit.

3. How the human mind functions

   a. Association is the principal requisite to the development of the human mind.

   b. Universalism is the ideal condition necessary to make possible the complete development of the human mind.

   c. This ideal is to be attained through long process of evolution. Grouping along national lines the present stage in the process of evolution.

4. The extent to which collective mind has manifested itself in the Jewish people.

   a. This can be determined by adopting a criterion whereby we can tell the presence of mind and the difference between a less developed and a more developed mind.

   b. The criteria are:

      1) Memory)
      2) Imagination) Self-consciousness
      3) Power of self-adjustment)

   c. The social mind of the Jewish people

      1) Memory - history and tradition

      2) Imagination - Messianic Ideal

      3) Power of self-adjustment as shown in life in different lands and eras

   d. The supremacy of the Jewish collective mind or Jewish soul proved by the fact that the greater part of humanity has had to resort to the Jewish people to acquire a soul. The Bible the basis of Christianity and Mohammedamism.

5. Manner in which the collective mind of the Jewish people must henceforth function.

a. Mind whether individual or collective functions only through physical organism. Hence the need of concerning the physical nationality. This can only be done in a Jewish land.

b. Collective mind has to be made articulate through signs, symbols, language ar ceremonies. Hence the need of conserving the traditional customs until new life will give rise to new ceremonies.

c. Until Jews will acquire center of national life it is necessary to

1) Establish Jewish centers in the diaspora so as to conserve the Jewish organism.

2) Individualize the spiritual strivings of the Jewish people by bringing to bear upon each individual life the benefits of the minds supremacy-social reform and mental healing.

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Tuesday, September 18, 1917 יום ג' אלול

My family and I stayed in Long Branch this year until last Tuesday. I occupied the pulpit on the Sabbath preceding. The following were the thoughts I develpped on the portion of the sidrah dealing with the blessing and curse to be pronounced by the priests between Mts. Ebal and Gerigim.

1. The purpose of the ceremony was to bring home to those that entered the land that they received the law anew. This is suggested by the passage preceding the Blessing and the Curse הולא ה"ת לשון ברית vide Rashi. In this spirit Moses gave Israel the משנה תורה (מלשון המלכת שנית); likewise, the Talmud and the משנה תורה of Maimonides.

We are in need of a similar renewal of the Law to fit conditions of today.

2. The importance of winning for the practice of Jewish life the consent and wholehearted sanction of the people as indicated by the word שמר כל העם הזה. Without such consent the law must remain a dead letter.

3. Above all is there need for public sentiment to back up the laws with regard to the kind of practices alluded to in the blessings and curses, for they are practices that can be carried on in secret and for which the one guilty of them can not be brought to court. I instanced the law against misleading the blind.

a. Its meaning illustrated by that of ולפני עור לא תתן מכשול vide Rabbinical comments.

b. The instincts are blind. The intelligence instead of leading them aright misleads them by indulging them and then furnishes them with reasons justifying their actions. Sophistry.

c. The demagogue who misleads the instincts of large groups.

d. We Jews have been cursed with misleaders עור כי יאמן זה בעמנו Most guilty of such misleady have been the majority of rabbis who are for the most part intellectually dishonest, and who refuse to come out with the truth about many of the traditional beliefs and practices. (I did not use the last phrase; as always I allude to this evil in public in vague terms. Am I guilty of being a מלשין myself? God knows.

The fact is that while every one in the congregation was highly pleased with my remarks, there was one "judl" there who took me to task in the afternoon for not being specific enough. Do I want reform! Why

don't I say so plainly. All I succeed in is to produce - sense of dissatisfaction with the past. I asked him whether his children came to the synagogue thinking thereby th prove to him the futility of his own methods of appeal. "Yes", he answered. My boy heard you." Doesn't he approve of what I say." "On the contrary, he approves altogether too much of what you say," he replied, "and he points out to me that I and my ways are no good. This is all the good that you and all who come from Schechter's Seminary do."

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Wednesday, September 19, 1917

I preached the first day of Rosh Hashono at the 85 St. Synagogue. Goldstein who was the rabbi there for three years resigned last spring. His inability as a preacher and his general lack of commonsense rendered him unfit for the task of holding together the gradually dissolving Jewish community identified with the 85 Street Synagogue. I was asked by the officials of the synagogue to occupy the pulpit during the holidays. Having been active inthe organization of the Jewish Center I felt it my duty to show my interest in and loyalty to the congregation where I had ministered for five and a half years, and where a number of peo;e have come to look upon me as one who is responsible for the integrity of the Jewish community of this section. I therefore accepted the invitation to preach in the synagogue not only during the holidays but every other week for an indefinite period.

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SAturday night, September 22, 1917

The following is the outline of the sermon:

There are two ways of entering into the spirit of the day. One is to focus our thoughts upon ourselves and consider both the past year with its varied experiences of joy and sorrow and the year to come with its uncertainties and possibilities. Thoughts such as these inevitably lead to the conclusion that life is fleeting and transient.

a conclusion from which the only escape is the reassertion of faith voiced in the words with which the ונתנה תוקף concludes לשנה הבאה מלך מי יקים. This method of catering to the spirit of the day is rendered vocal by the ונתנה תוקף

Yet it is not the one which is voiced in the fundamental prayers of the day, the מלכויות זכרונות ושופרות The mood which the introspective method generates is commonplace as compared with the one generated by an attentive recitation of the musaph service. To appreciate the distinction we may compare the mood generated by the ונתנה תוקף to the experience of a soldier in the trenches who in the midst of his hardships beholds the commander in chief next to him; wereas the attitude of mind created by the musaph may be likened to the experience of the soldier who is permitted to get a glimpse among the officers of the high command of the battlefield as a whole. It is thus that the sentiments expressed in the fundamental prayers of the day take us to heights whence we catch sight of thelarge vistas of human life, and whence we behold nations and kingdoms struggling to achieve the purposes marked out for them by a Higher Power who is gradually shaping his kingdom into being.

Even the notion of divine judgment assumes a different aspect from this standpoint. We no longer picture to ourselves the mass of mankind as so many criminals dragged before the throne of the Almighty each one anxious to hear the divine pronouncement as it affects him in particular, and only interested in the fate of others to the extent that it may serve as a precaste of his own. A more correct analogy is that of a whole army division that has revolted from the government, and which upon coming it its better senses appoints some of its member to beg for forgiveness. The emissaries while by no means unconcerned as to what may befall themselves are chiefly concerned as to the fate of the thousands whose cause they have come to plea. In the same way should we look upon ourselves as emissaries pleading for a humanity that has revolted from its king.

If we celebrate the ראה in the spirit described the will each have its significant message for us as to what should be our attitude towards the present world crisis. It has taken this war to give reality to the prayer for the establishment of the kingdom of the Almighty, a prayer that to most of us sounded as rather far-fetched. Now however it translates into the language of the spirit the great issues involved in the present world conflict. We now realize more clearly what is meant by the kingdom of the Almighty because of the tremendous power developed by the "dominion of arrogance." While it is true that the citizens of the dominion of arrogance are to be found in every land, there is no doubt that Germany has done more than any other country to usurp to itself most of the prerogatives and ruthlessness of the dominion of arrogance. America's entry into the war has helped to make clear that the principal purpose of the war is to rid the world of the dominion of arrogance. This is implied in Wilson's plea to make the world safe for democracy. We Jews should come to the assistance of America in this her hour of trial not alone out of gratitude for the asylum which we have found here, but also because of the opportunity that is granted us to back our prayers with deeds.

Also the וכתבת will have a new meaning for us. Emphasizing as those texts do the responsibility of the individual, they also lacked the ring of reality because we could never persuade ourselves that it made much difference in the vast sum of human deeds whether we chose the good or the evil in life. Latterly, however, all such war measures as are based on the principle of each one doing his bit for his country the importance of our most casual deeds has been borne in upon us. If it is true that the saving of a slice of bread or of a piece of meat willhelp our armies to achieve victory, how much tfuer is it that if we were to eliminate all war-making traits from our characters that there would be an end to all war.

The hope for the restoration of Israel expressed in the Shofar would tend to become more ardent. How remarkable that simultaneously with the first glimmerings of the newer world and the clearing of the ground for the establishment of the kingdomof the Almighty the restoration of Israel to her land should begin to be discussed in the courts and chancelleries of the mightiest nations'. The more unpardonable the supine attitude assumed by most of us. We should be anxious more than ever to obtaina homeland so that the ideals which have been usurped and parodied by the dominion of arrogance should be demonstrated in their integrity. Oh if we were only given a chance to show what we understand by being the chosen of God, by the ideals of intra-and international justice.

In conclusion I read and interpreted the 46th Psalm.

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Sunday, September 23, 1917

Before I rose to speak I noticed the meagre attendance in the front part of the synagogue and the general lack of spirit with which the services were conducted. This is a phase of an evil that threatens to become serious. The more prosperous our people are getting the more time they spend out of town. Shabuoth finds them gone to their summer resorts and Succoth finds them still away. Hanukah they asually spend in Lakewood. The result is that the synagogue is ceasing to be a spiritual necessity even on the principal days of the Jewish calendar.

Is there any hope of ? (p.316) the conservative or so-called orthodox synagogue? The reform synagogue seems to be altogether beyond redemption as far as Jewish life is concerned. The reason that I despair of the latter is that it has lost all Jewish background. The Reform synagogue does not think in terms of the Hebrew language or of the main historic Jewish concepts. A religion from the point of view of its content side should primarily be a form of social life; from that

standpoint the religion of the reform synagogue is merely a kind of Unitarianism, because it is devoid of those elements of Jewish social life that go to make up the Jewish consciousness. On the other hand the conservative synagogue is incapable to all appearances of adjusting itself to the newer ideas and the newer life of today. In a year or so I hope to be able to tell whether the appointment of Berkson to the position of superintendent of the Central Institute will have the effect of reviving the 85 Street Synagogue which is very much on the decline at the present time. Berkson is one of the few idealists in the Bureau of Education who have been identified with it from the very beginning. His knowledge of things Jewish he owes to a large extent to the work he did with Rabbi Levine, Friedlaender and myself. He has to some extent been influenced by me inhis attitude towards Judaism, and I therefore expect him to translate into action the conception of Judaism that I have been advocating the last few years. Should he fail my faith in the future of Judaism will be entirely shaken. His success on the other hand, should express itself in the revival of the synagogue adjoining the institute. When such a revival will have taken place the time will be ripe for a genuine reform and improvement of the service and of the entire ceremonial system.

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Tuesday night, October 9, 1917 ( )

Despite my mid-summer resolution to retract my promise to preach in the 85 St. synagogue I spoke four times during the holiday season. The following are outlines of the three sermons delivered on Yom Kippur, First day of Succoth and on Shmini Atsereth, respectively.

The large numbers of our people that are drawn to the synagogue on Y.K. are no indication that all is well with us Jews. It was only in the past that the saying שלמה עין בל יראת הלא ועולה עין הוראב applied. Nowadays such gatherings are not in the nature of the glow of health

but of the hectic flush of consumption. The congregation I was addressing proved that this was true. On comparing its condition today with that of ten years ago, one could not help realizing that it was on the decline. Hence my appeal אשׁ לכם לב חדשׁ ורוח חדשׁה נתן בקרבכם ותחיו

It is futile to address such an appeal to those who are no longer affiliated with the synagogue. Their reply would be "Why not die as Jews? Would not such death release us from many a burden which now weighs so heavily upon us?" But those who still come to the synagogue on Y.K. show that they want to remain Jews. Why then should they allow Israel to die when it is in their power to have Israel live?

But the only condition on which it is possible for Israel to survive is to make to himself a new heart and a new spirit. The fact that the prophet urges Israel אשׁ לכם shows that it is in Israel's power to achieve a change of heart and of spirit. A change of heart and of spirit means a change of standards in Jewish life and thought. It is another term for transvaluation of values. As Jewish life and thought are comprised within the three terms, God, Torah and Israel, it is to these three concepts that we must apply entirely different standards from those that have been in vogue hitherto. It has come to be a cheap matter to be a Jew. One doesn't even have to be born a Jew. Bernhardt and Brandes are accounted Jewish.

1. We need in the first place a conception of God that shall fit in with our enlarged idea of the universe and with our notion of natural law. The Jews have not during the last century and a half produced a single work that deals with the God idea in religion. Jewish scholarship has become synonymous with archaeology pure and simple. Yet that was not the case as long as Judaism had the sap of life. Witness Jewish Philosophy and Kabbalah. Further more we have to cultivate a sense of the reality of things spiritual. God should be so real to us that in place of the fear and distrust which overcloud our lives we

should be possessed of such peace, poise and power as to render us free and joyful and give us a sense of dominion

No Jew or Jewess would then feel the need of turning to new thought or to Christian Science for a more immediate realization of the existence of God.

2. We should adopt new standards in our attitude toward the Torah. We need to have its truths reinterpreted inthe light of modern thought. (I forgot to mention the last thought in the course of the delivery.) We need above all to create a Jewish sentiment that will attach at least as much weight to periodic study of Torah as to prayer. Illiteracy a greater disgrace now than in the past. Standards have changed. Why can we not change the standards of requirement in Jewish life? At present even orthodox congregations are losing all background of Jewish thought and knowledge. Men are sent forth as rabbis whose learning is scant, because a premium is placed upon igrnorance of things Jewish. A little less card playing would leave room for periodic study.

3. In our attitude towards Israel we have to develop new standards of fraternity and solidarity. We should maintain the desire to live with Jews even when we have acquired enough wealth to be able to get along without them. As long as we believe in maintaining a Ghetto in the cemetery we can not afford to abolish it altogether while we are still alive. We must frown down all forms of social climbing that lead to assimilation.

Above all is it necessary to vitalize the synagogues which are to Jewish life what the nerve centers are to the rest of the body? A) We should reorganize them on a democratic basis. The seat holder system all wrong. B) We should foster a spirit of loyalty among its members. The shifting of population and the tendency to spend the holidays away from the synagogue are undermining its existence. C) We should learn to look upon leadership in it as a privilege and not a burden

D) We should develop a passion for federation. Here I put in a plea for the federation of Kehilath Jeshurun (85 St.) Orach Hayim (Lex. Ave. near 95 St.) and the Jewish Center (West 86 St.)

All this would help towards creating in us a "sense of all Israel." It would impel us to take a share in all Jewish activities that have as their object the promotion of the general Jewish good the world over.

I concluded the address with an appeal for the war sufferers; the point I made was that the old standards of relief should no longer content us because they are imperative in a crisis like the present one. About $8000 was promised by the congregation when contributions were called for.

The following is the outline of the sermon I delivered on the First day of Succoth.

As soon as Yom Kippur is over the pious Jew is expected to build the Sukkah. There is more than an accidental connection between the Succoth festival and the season of Tshuvah which precedes it. Tshuvah has a different connotation from that of repentance. "Repentance" implies some kind of expiation as is shown by its etomology, whereas "Tshuvah" simply means return. Return to what? The answer is given by the Sukkah, "Return to the simple, the natural, the primitive and the primary sources of life." The principle of the Sukkah is an antidote and corrective to the ever growing complexity of civilization. We have to go back in order to go forward.

Examine the whole of our early history and you will find that it is a demonstration of the validity of the principle. On the one hand was the rich, bedigene and alluring civilization of Canaan. On the other the simple manners and faith brought from the wilderness. The only thing that prevented our ancestors from falling victim to the Canaanitish civilization was the recollection of its

wilderness days which the prophets constantly strove to render vivid to them. (Cf. the Rehabites.)

The importance of resorting to the simplicity in which life had its beginnings is borne out in every phase of life. We seek to counteract the danger of the enormous growth of cities by urging people "Back to the Farms." In science - back to the physical realities instead of wandering among the mazes of futile pseudo concepts that had grown up in course of time. In philosophy - Descartes. In education - back to the child. In the life of the individual - back to the simplicity of the childhood years - (2 Sam 23:15)

Unless we retain the power of refreshing ourselves by contact with the original sources of life and reality civilization is bound to become a) fragmentary, b) artificial, c) sterile and d) parisitic. The fact that the apartment house has crowded out and rendered the Succah practically impossible is symbolic of the trend of modern civilization. Instead of plain living and high thinking which the Succah stands for, we have high living and plain, all too plain thinking.

The universal significance of the Sukkah is clearly recognized both in Scriptures and in rabbinic writings. It is the only Mitzvah that is assigned to the nations in the days to come. - (Reading Haftarah) There is a saying in Midrash (Yalkut in Ps. 29) that the Messiah will come mainly to give two mitzvot to the nations, When the nations will in time to come present themselves before God to claim reward for what they have achieved, our sages say, God will say to them "Since you have done little for the spiritual life, what spiritual reward can you obtain? And to prove how incapable they are of spiritual achievement God will propose to them to make Succoth. (Cf.) It is a frame of mind which the nations are not qualified to maintain for long. Rome forgot her primitive simplicity when she conquered Greece and the Orient. America too is in

danger of losing her puritan vigor, her insularity and her spirit of hospitality.

For us Jews today the סוכות principle involves a return to the only source of our spiritual life that can prevent it from becoming artificial, sterile and parisitic, "Eretz Yisrael". To accept the dispersion as our normal condition is to forget the principle of Succoth. Let us not fail to be in contact once again with the life giving reality with a homeland of our own.

Yesterday I preached the following:

The holiday season is drawing to a close. Nearly ~~xxxxxxxx~~ everybody, men in business, housewives, school children, will be glad the holidays are over. This however is not the spirit in which we should conclude the holiday season. עצרת denotes reluctance at parting (Cf. עצבה על אותך). God says עצרת. קשה עלי פרידתכם is a term by which also the last day of Passover is designated. Why this reluctance? Because there is apt to set in a reaction. It is difficult to sustain the emotions in the valley of everyday existence that we experience on the spiritual heights to which we occasionally rise, especially at this time of the year. It is the reaction that Solomon had in mind when upon dismissing the people after the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ dedication of the temple he wished them והיו לבבכם שלם עם ה' (I Kings 8:61). Even God himself said after the Israelites had been overcome by the glory of the revelation - Oh that they were of this heart always! The Talmud finds ~~xxxxx~~ it is true, fault with Israel for not asking God to grant them the heart that would sustain their loyalty and devotion to God, but the fact that this is a task which God has assigned to the human race - the task of inventing some means whereby we would be enabled to sustain the emotions and enthusiasms that we now experience only in rare moments.

Of course the only way is through action. If we could find suitable action to body forth our noble resolves and exalted emotions the problem would be solved. Thus far mankind has been able to find the necessary opportunities for sustaining its great emotion. Promptings in no other way except through war or in the preparation for war. The sentiments of national unity and patriotism usually die out in times of peace. This is illustrated by the history of Israel in the era of the Judges. In American history we meet with the same experience. The unity that was maintained during the revolutionary war was with difficulty maintained after the war. The spirit of generous sacrifice that marked both sides of the nation during the civil war was followed by decades noted for exploitation and individualism from the effects of which only a war like the present one will rid us.

* * *

Wednesday, October 10, 1917

But as Jews we have no such means as war or the preparation for it to keep alive the emotional promptings that are stirred in us from time to time. On the other hand not having cultivated the means for normal outlet to our spiritual emotions we are in danger of having our Jewish will rendered weak and impotent. The fact that the Jewish will has become nerveless is due to the tendency to allow ourselves to be stirred to great enthusiaism without afterwards finding the means for carrying out the resolves conceived on those inspired occasions. Our enthusiasms are like strawfire. Hence the weakness of the Jewish will.

But are we not supposed to be a stiff-necked people? Is it not due to our stiff-neckedness that we have been able to hold out to the present day? We have a stubborn will but not a strong will. A stubborn will resists, a strong will persists; a stubborn will allies itself to tradition, a strong will to purpose; a stubborn will keeps to the past, a strong will builds for the future. We may have shown all

the qualities of a stubborn will, but we do not know what it is to plan, to build, to reckon with the future. We grow enthusiastic about many undertakings, that we never see through. The Agudath Yisrael, the Kehillah, the Congress movement, The Zionist Movement is the only one where there are some evidences of our ability to translate emotion into action. This is why it has a stronger hold on us than any other activity. Yet so many of those that I was addressing have little use for Zionism. So paralyzed has the Jewish will become that it can on the one hand be praying for גאלה in Palestine and on the other be entirely indifferent to the fact that the land to be rendered fruitful by the גאלה is in the hands of evil Arabs. Many a person that would give twenty-five dollars for the privilege of פדיון would not pay twenty-five cents toward the National Fund.

If the message of ארץ meets with no response in us there is an appeal of the same kind from a source that we should scarcely disregard. It comes from those whom we have named in the יזכור. The purpose of the memorial service as well as of the Kaddish and אב"מ is to redeem the dead. The notion that the dead are in need of redemption at the hands of the living is at the furthest remove from the worship of the dead. It is based upon the following from the Sifre. כבר יצחק אלון התייקר The popular imagination which has depicted the sufferings of the dead in terms of fire and brimstone gives but a faint notion of the genuine hell on the brink of which every soul of the departed trembles, the hell of futility, the hell so vividly portrayed by Koheleth in his גם אהבתם גם שנאתם ואת Ecc 9:6. It is out of this hell that we are called upon to rdeem them. By helping to perpetuate the community of Israel we are redeeming them from such a hell. The dead are not dead as long as the community that gave them spiritual life is still living. The purpose of the Kaddish is likewise to establish the fact that יהא שמיה רבא מברך לעלם ולעלמי. The future and not the past is the keynote of all our prayers for the dead. Unless we shall give heed to this

appeal of those whom we prayed for in the כלה the world will say כלה for the Jewish people and set up a statue for it as it has done for the vanished Indian. Only by being everyday Jews and not merely holiday Jews can such catastrophe be prevented.

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Friday, November 9, 1917

On Saturday, October 13 I participated in the banquet given by Messrs. Ira Kaplan and ~~Jack~~ Jake Lubell נתן תורה אחרן respectively. It was given at my suggestion at the Central Jewish Institute, my object being to give Berkson an opportunity to be presented to the representative members of the 85 St. congregation. Isaac Cohen acted as toastmaster. The only ones that spoke were Margolis, myself and Berkson. Each of us made a long drawn out stilted and conventional speech. There was nothing of warmth or geniality in the atmosphere. Our occasions of rejoicing are a caricature of the principle implied in שמחת בית השואבה. We do not know how to rejoice reverently, so we rejoice ritualistically according to ר"ת. There is not the least spark of naturalness or humanity about these occasions.

Berkson spoke in a vein that has become a mannerism with the Bureau - a la Benderly. The mannerism consists of an easy verbosity that lacks a sense of proportion and that at times assumes a patronizing attitude, due to a failure to realize that older people cannot be addressed in the same way as children. In his remarks Berkson was tactless enough to allude to Benderly, Magnes and myself as his backers, and to omit all reference to Margolis. I learned afterwards that Margolis resented this oversight.

I had occasion to sit near ~~Revel~~ Bernard. The conversation turned upon the work of the Menorah. He asked me whether Horowitz who is on the Yeshiva staff is the right man for that kind of work. I replied in the negative. Again I was convinced that he is bent upon gaining control of Orthodox Jewry and that he will override all scruples of conscience and conviction to attain his end.

For some time previous to that Sabbath my spirit was again troubled by the whole problem of Jewish life in this country, and the renewed realization of our anomolous position in Golus led me to think of S. Travis, Revel's brother-in-law as a man who might help me out of the horrible predicament in which I find myself, by offering me an opportunity to go into business. Travis looks like a man in my years, medium in height, clean shaven, stockily built and quite regularly featured and healthful looking. Though uncultured and supperstitiously religious, he seems nevertheless to have business acumen of the predatory type. Together with his brothers he has made a fortune in the oil industry in Oklahoma. I formed his acquaintance in Long Branch where he stayed during the last summer. It was there that he came to see me about the plan he had in mind of subsidizing the Seminary in order to swing it over to ~~?(p.326)~~ Yeshiva pure orthodoxy, and incidentally as some suggest, to make his brother-in-law president. I learned afterwards that he had carried on lengthy negotiations with the directors of the Seminary, that he had offered at first to give $5000 towards scholarships for students to devote themselves to the study leading to התואר הרבני, to be given by orthodox rabbis like Margolis and Klein, that the directors had offered him a trusteeship and that he did not accept the trusteeship but increased his offer to $10,000 and more, if the Seminary would appoint an Orthodox Rav as president. Whether he meant to keep his promise or not I am not altogether certain, for ~~so far~~ as I have noted that he threatens to do big things and to donate big moneys, but so far has done practically nothing. Fortunately for the Seminary and Judaism he could not come to an understanding with the trustees, or the faculty, and his offer has been discreetly turned down.

Despite my lack of confidence in the man, I made up my mind a few days before ראש השנה to see him and to ask him whether he had any business opening for me. As we were washing our hands for the

banquet, I incidentally asked him for an appointment for the day following. He received me next morning at his house, 11 E. 86 - a furnished mansion recently rented by him - very cordially. After pointing out to him that I was anxious to give up my work, because of the intransigeant character of our people who will not put away their petty differences for the sake of uniting for the Jewish cause which is in grave danger, I told him that I was prepared to enter practical life, if I ~~was~~ were offered an opportunity to do so. His reply was that it would not pay me to enter into his service as a salaried worker. There was too little in that. If on the other hand I had enough capital - say between $30,000 and $40,000, or could get my brothers-in-law to invest that amount, he would help me organize a little company. The money would be invested in some oil plant, which I would be given charge of, and in that way I would obtain my object.

The proposition seemed a likely one, and I immediately telephoned to Jake about it. Another appointment was made for one o'clock of that same day, because Travis ~~was~~ had to leave in the evening for the West. Jake brought Max with him and the three of us listened to the plan that Travis unfolded. He took particular care to emphasize that it was for my sake that he was willing to give all the advice and help I needed in order to be introduced into the oil business.

Sunday, November 11, 1917

My imagination was at once fired with the vision of the new and free life that I might lead, and the hope of self-realization flared up anew. But it was only a momentary dream. Jake investigated Travis' methods of doing business and he learned that Travis had many holdings of which he was anxious to git rid and that he displayed a similar interest in others to whom he was anxious to sell at the present time when oil prices are sky high. Thus once again I was left to wrestle with my spiritual difficulties.

On Sunday, October 14, the opening exercises of the Seminary took place. Instead of being held as they formerly were in the synagogue with only the student body and the faculty present, they were held this time in the lecture room where quite a large assembly was gotten together consisting in addition to the above of a number of alumni, a few visitors and two trustees. No doubt Adler is intent upon giving more eclat to the Seminary affairs than was hitherto his wont. From appearances he seems quite intrenched in his position as acting president. As for what was said by Adler, Marshall and Ginzberg I cannot but hold in slight esteem the sentiments they expressed. Adler's remarks were conventional and rambling. Marshall showed a want of ordinary common sense in finding fault with the Jews who claimed exemption from military service on the ground of being conscientious objectors. Every one of them, he thundered, gave some kind of ism as an excuse but not Judaism. And then he went on to denounce those who do not acquiesce whole heartedly in the war policy of our government. This only shows how little imagination the man possesses. He can not realize that the Jewish young man, the more faithful he is to his people, would be the less likely to involve his religion in the blame that he is drawing upon himself by pleading exemption. Ginzberg too exasperated me with his arguments on behalf of the Talmud. The study of philology and of the different Aramaic jargons to be found in the Tlamud figured most prominently among the reasons for knowing the Talmud. He had something to say about equivalents, as pointing to a method of utilizing its teachings, but the few living sparks of practical purpose were smothered by the ashes of his archaeological interests.

The courses at the Seminary this year are a vast improvement upon what they were in previous years. This is the result of the addition to the teaching staff of two instructors, Rabbis Morris Levin and Kotkov, at a cost of about $2200. The addition of these men has made it possible

for the classes to be divided into smaller and more homogenous groups. One can gain an idea of the inefficiency of the Seminary when one bears in mind that for fifteen years an annual expense of $50,000 was allowed to do one tenth of the service that it could render, because of the reluctance to spend an additional $2200 for tuition fee, instead of on all sorts of worm-eaten books and manuscripts. The library which has usurped the part of the building originally intended for classrooms and meeting rooms would itself be a great institution, if the students were taught how to utilize it, and if it were also to contain books of a general and human interest. But as it is conducted at present, it is like a sealed book to most of the men there. Only the few ambitious ones stumble upon the inexhaustible treasures that are hidden there.

At the beginning of the term the students sent in a petition to the faculty, asking them to call upon me to give a course which, for want of a better name, they designated practical theology. Two faculty meetings took place without the letter being read. When finally it was read it gave rise to the kind of discussion that one could expect from men who lack soul and vision. Marx said not a word, Davidson pretended ignorance as to the kind of a course that was wanted, Max Hyamson said "Alright we can trust Kaplan," Friedlaender played the double game of progressive and obstructionist, Ginzberg openly opposed my giving the course. Friedlaender parliamentarian that he is moved that the students be asked to explain more in detail what they wanted. Seeing that the faculty is opposed to my giving any courses, I have resolved that it were best for me to let the matter alone altogether and to proceed working out my ideas in book form so that these bats will have to come out of their holes.

My mind is at present agitated by the uncertainty as to what to do with regard to the Jewish Center on the West Side which is nearing completion. J.H.Cohen, William Fischman, Abraham Rothstein and "Ike" Phillips came to see me on Wednesday, October 24 avowedly with the purpose of discussing whether to open the Center as soon as the auditorium would be finished, or to wait until the whole of the present structure is completed. Primarily, however, their purpose was to ask me to head the institution. I know that they were willing to offer me a salary of $7500. But I was no more ready to answer them that night whether or not I intended to accept the position than I had been at any time since the question of my taking charge of the work began to be discussed. Surely the entire manner of Ike Phillips that evening did not contribute to my zeal for the position. J.H.Cohen says there was a great deal of good in him. I suppose I can take his word for it. But from what I can see, Ike Phillips is a true replica of his father "Moishe" Phillips, an ex-shohet, and a pillar of the 85 St. synagogue, whose word cannot be trusted in any matter wherein his pocket or his ambition is involved.

It is clear to me that with the exception of the small group of three or four people, most of those affiliated with the Center have gone into the undertaking blindly. Some want a synagogue primarily, others want mainly a club. The length of time it has taken to put up the building has dampened the enthusiasm even of the few. Besides, the group is of the typically successful bourgeois type. With a synagogue limited to about 390 seats, with each seat having to be bought by people who are in a position to defray the tremendous building expense what chance is there of the institution's keeping open house, so to speak. Would not the spirit of democracy which has been to some extent the soul of the synagogue hitherto, be completely banished from the Center? These doubts pester me, although in a weak moment I telephoned to Cohen that I was willing to accept the position without a salary. The week after the few people I mentioned before came to see me again, except

the place of Ike Phillips was taken by Sadowsky. They thanked me for my offer. I have not retracted it yet, but I have a good mind to do so. The principal reason for my irresolution is that I can not make up my mind whether I should concentrate on studying and writing, or strive to attain a certain amount of power in the Jewish community. Were I sure that my intellectual pursuits would lead to publication, I would not hesitate for a moment to put everything else aside. But I have not much confidence in my literary ability, and I am afraid that if I let go this opportunity of become a public factor I might be a dissappointed man in later years. I hope and pray that God should lead me aright so that I shall feel that the work to which I shall finally have dedicated myself is the kind of work wherein I can be of most service to the Jewish cause.

Last Wednesday (Nov. 7) most of the people who are identified with the Center, together with a few others gave a dinner to Rothstein in honor of his sixtieth birthday. It was a genuine and spontaneous expression of love and respect for Rothstein. Although he was praised in the highest terms I did not go away feeling that it was a jollification affair. I sincerely believe that if a man like Rothstein had lived in ancient times he would have acquired the halo of sainthood. If he had possessed the intellectual acumen of J.H.Cohen he would have stood out as one of the most remarkable characters in Jewish life.

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Tuesday, December 4, 1917

About two weeks ago George Kohut called me up on the 'phone and asked me whether I would conduct services on some Friday night at Camp Upton. In the course of the conversation it developed that it might be advisable to have the students of the Seminary go out to officiate there. I went that same day to meet the students at their lunch hour and when I placed the proposition before them they expressed

a willingness to cooperate, although some of them feared that the drafted soldiers might resent that the Seminary students were exempt. Dr. Kohut was supposed to meet them afterwards and give them detailed information about what they should expect and what they should do when they get out there. I learned afterwards, however, that he supplied them with very little information.

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Monday, January 7, 1918

~~As~~ Since I was asked by Judge Lehman to write out an account of my experiences at Camp Upton I do not care to repeat what I have to say in that account.

On Wednesday, December 26 I read a paper before the Menorah convention which took place in this city on "The Status and Aim of Emancipated Jewry."

On Friday, January 4 I went to Boston to participate in the celebration of the 10th anniversary of my brother-in-law's (P.Israeli) incumbency in the pulpit of the Roxbury Synagogue.

I have just finished reading Charles H. Pearson's book on "National Life and Character." I have never read anything that has had such a saddening effect on me. It has for the time being taken the heart out of my endeavor to arrive at an understanding of the meaning of God in human life. It appears to me that books of that kind are bound to bring on the sooner the inevitable senility of the human race.

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Sunday, January 20, 1918

The Jewish Center of W. 86 Street was opened yesterday for services, despite the fact that the synagogue proper is still in the process of construction. The services were held at the auditorium which can admit about two hundred. The reason they inaugurated the services without waiting until the building was entirely completed was that Max Weinstein one of the members celebrated the Bar Mitzvah

of his son. Weinstein is not affiliated with any congregation and it occurred to some of the other members that if his son's Bar-mitzvah were made the occasion ~~afxxxxkixxgxxkxx~~ for inaugurating services at the Center, he would show his appreciation by contributing liberally toward the building fund. As I understand he is one of the most successful cloak manufacturers in this city. As far as I can see his vulgarity measures up to his reputed wealth.

The spirit of the people who belong to the organization is clearly reflected in this action of theirs. Altogether I feel very much out of sorts about the whole business and I wonder what I can do to extricate myself from it. My distemper reflected itself in the lack of enthusiasm which marked the sermon that I delivered in the morning. (See notes.)

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Sunday, January 27, 1918

Last Thursday (Jan. 24) I spoke at Baltimore in Rabbi Lazaron's temple. My subject was "What is Jewish Education?" Rabbi Lazaron was over to see me last year to get me to come out to Baltimore. He belongs to the regular type of Cincinnati Hebrew Union College graduates, a smooth shaven, dapper, glib and polite young man. Like many of the younger graduates of that school he has a leaning toward Zionism which means that he is anxious to find a more convincing raison d'etre for his being a rabbi than the fact that he is to uphold the Jewish mission. It is evident that he is a seeker and is willing to learn. There are many men of that type in the Reform rabbinate who would rally enthusiastically about any leader who would voice the need for a reform movement based upon scientific principles of human society.

Lazaron, however, does not content himself merely with a vague longing for more Jewish content in the life of his people. He realizes clearly that the children of his ~~xxxgxxxxxxxxx~~ congregants must receive

a more intensive education than what they get in Sunday School. He urged the establishment of an everyday Jewish school. It was in order to have me back up his plea that he wanted me to come to Baltimore last year. I did not get the chance to do so last year. He came again to see me this year and after a few weeks sent the principal of his newly organized Hebrew School, a young man by the name of Rodman, to induce me to come. I finally yielded and accepted the invitation.

When I arrived at Baltimore I was met by Lazaron's wife. He was unable to meet me because of some previous engagement. From the conversation that I had with her I learned that she had been a Wheeling, Va. girl. It was there that L. had ministered before he came to Baltimore. She had been a student at Barnard, and while there had been entirely out of touch with Jewish life. If now and then she was prompted to go to a synagogue she felt herself so isolated in this desire that she soon lost interest altogether. This fact of her dropping out from Jewish life during her formative years is a noteworthy evidence of the failure of the Reform movement. As a child and young girl she was a pupil of some of the most successful Reform rabbis in this country. Harry Levi of Boston was Rabbi in Wheeling for 13 years. Krass was also there for quite a while. She expressed the highest regard for Levi as a spiritual influence in her life, because his practice was in conformity with his preaching. One might, therefore, have expected that these rabbis would have at least influenced her when she went to a city like N.Y. to get in touch with Jewish personalities or organizations. Instead her contacts were confined to people affiliated with the Ethical Culture movement. If she had not married a rabbi, she would probably have forgotten that she was a Jewess.

She deplored the fact that they come in little contact with gentiles. When the rabbi does go down once in a while to the city club he meets again some of his own members who invite him to dine with them, so that he gets no opportunity to come in contact with gentile society. She feels keenly sometimes the lack of gentile friends, a lack which is quite general with the Baltimore Jews. This social ghetto is due to the many Jewish activities in which the women engage. Between these and their homes they have no time left for other than Jewish society. Only a few Jewish women receive general recognition and enjoy the privilege of gentile society. Things were different in Wheeling. She expressed her satisfaction in the fact, however, that she had learned that there was a great deal to Jewish life about which she had known nothing. She was not sure, she said, whether she would be able to take charge of the Bible class in the absence of her husband who had to go out of town the next day. The subject she would have to discuss with the class was the New Testament.

I was shown her eleven month baby and of course I had to say the conventional thing about his looking like his father, his being bright looking, etc. When Lazaron came our conversation turned upon the usual topics of the ministry. I was surprised to learn that he knows more about present day currents of thought than most rabbis do. In fact he has been cultivating Bergson with avidity. He stressed what he called the "peoplehood" of the Jews.

There were about seventy five people in the audience, mostly women. It took me a few minutes to adjust myself to the situation as a good many of the women kept on knitting while I was talking. Sometimes the women do get me tired, with their brainstorms and fads. I congratulate myself upon not having accepted the invitation to speak in the afternoon of that day to a joint meeting of the sisterhood of the three temples. I would have run mad with all those knitting needles going to the rythm of my periodic sentences.

Yesterday I preached at the Jewish Center. There were no more than about seventy five people present. It is with the utmost effort that I summon enough enthusiasm to prevent the sermon from being a failure. I realize every day more clearly that the Center is nothing but a one man institution, J.H.Cohen being the man. I am at a loss whether it is better to be as stubborn and determined as he is in the face of insufferable difficulties, or to resort to compromise as by temperament I am always inclined to do. I feel that circumstances have a logic and justification of their own against which it is presumption to pit my will and my logic. God is as much in the circumstances as he is in the man who moulds them. This is the only attitude of mind that can make for tolerance and peace in the world. After all is said and done more good has resulted from tolerance and peace than from the pursuit of the positive and aggressive ideals.

* * * *

Saturday night, March 2, 1918

During the last three weeks I have been quite miserable. I am adrift again, tossed hither and thither by contrary gusts of passionate anger and disappointment. I have severed my relations with the West Side Center. The attitude of Cohen had been troubling me ever since I took an interest in the undertaking. His dogged obstinacy in the policy of reaction became unbearable from the moment the activities at the Center began with the holding of Sabbath services. The things that annoyed me may seem exceedingly petty, but they were to me an indication of what I was to expect right along. He had his way in the construction of the synagogue with the women to be seated on the side in a kind of false gallery. He consulted Haymson (Rabbis) and Margolis (M.J.) about the gallery not for the purpose of knowing the actual law, but how to be sufficiently within the letter of the law and yet please the members. In the auditorium the men sit on one side and the women on the other.

Again in order to be within the law, or merely its letter, he has had a rope passed through the first line of chairs upon which the women are seated. The almemar ~~is on the stage.~~ platform in the front part of the synagogue. When the Torah is read he does not ~~xx~~ permit the reader to face the audience. All such trifles, in their cumulative effect, exhibit the man as a Pahrisee in the worst sense of the word. I bore his fanaticism for a time, but my patience suddenly gave way and I cut loose from him. It all happened on account of something that apparently had nothing to do with questions of religious policy. It was understood that I was to engage an administrator to help me carry on the detail work.

Sunday, March 3, 1918

I was a long time trying to find one, when Cohen suggested that I interview a man by the name of Tomberg to see whether he would be acceptable. My first impression of T. was quite favorable, but when I saw him a second and a third time I felt that he lacked both point of view and vigor of mind. I stated my objections to Cohen and in fact went so far as to introduce to him a young man by the name of Gerdy who ~~was~~ had been recommended to me by Kadushin. Cohen himself could not but note the superiority of Gerdy to Tomberg. He at once realized that he belonged more to the Berkow Dushkin type than his man. Nevertheless he came to me next day - Friday, Feb. 8 - to persuade me that Tomberg, despite his deficiencies, would be the better man for the purpose. The reasons that he advanced were so in keeping with the opportunist spirit that he had been displaying ever since the building has been put up that I was very much disgusted and immediately telephoned to him that I would have nothing further to do with the Center, and that I would not even speak the next day. Cohen came to see me at once to find out, as he put it, wherein he had sinned. I then made it clear to him that he was gradually getting me to compromise with myself until there was nothing left of the ideals I valued most. "You are ruining my soul," I said to him.

He realized that I was determined not to yield this time, so he resorted to the plan of having Benderly act as mediator. Accordingly the three of us met at the Waldorf on Monday, Feb. 11 at nine in the morning. We discussed for more than three hours. The issue between Cohen and myself was whether the Shulchan Aruch was to be the last court of appeal in matters religious. I maintained that conditions at the present time called for the exercise of one's own discretion and that if our motive be to build up Judaism, we should experiment with various measures, only taking care to avoid the mistakes that have already been made. He stood his ground firmly and would not concede to anyone's right to depart from the law as laid down in the Shulchan Aruch.

In fact the entire discussion was rendered superfluous by reason of a remark that I had made to him when I saw him at the dinner given at Levinson's the night before on behalf of the Zionist cause. I then said to him, "You do not seem to realize that I am not orthodox; that is why you are trying to persuade me to take charge of the Center." When I said this, his whole attitude toward me changed. He froze up as I had never seen him do before. "That settled it," is what his whole bearing implied. He had known all along that my views were unorthodox, but he resented my openly declaring myself such. His philosophy is that however liberal one may be in his thoughts, he must refrain from giving expression to them.

On Thursday, Feb. 14, I saw Cohen again. He asked me what was to be done now. I told him the only thing for them to do was to engage a rabbi. When he asked me whom I would recommend I mentioned Charles H. Kauvar of Denver. I expalined that Kauvar would suit him, because he stopped thinking as soon as he might have begun to think. He asked me to write to Kauvar, which I did that very day. I have since received a reply from Kauvar wherein he expresses his willingness to come to New York. He is expected here this week.

On top of all this came the unsuccessful lecture that I delivered at Jacob Kohn's synagogue on Friday, Feb. 22. My subject was Americanism from the Jewish Point of View. Despite the fact that I had given much thought to the subject, the lecture was mere rant, and I had never been so ashamed of myself as I was after I was through speaking.

An address that I delivered in Rabbi Chertoff's synagogue on Friday Feb. 8 on the occasion of the eighteth anniversary of his congregation was not much better. Somehow I do not seem to be able to get the right word at the right time when I am on my feet. My memory plays me false when I am most in need of it. This causes me a great deal of anxiety, for I feel as though I have come to the limit of my powers and these are extremely inadequate for the achievement of anything worthwhile in Jewish life.

Engaged as I am now in self-pity, for which I despise myself the more, I may add that the annoyance that mother causes me with her moping and selfish disposition has a wearing effect on my nerves. If it were not for the little pleasure I get from my work with the students of the Seminary this year, I surely would have grown melancholy.

* * * *

Monday, March 4, 1918

As an antidote to the disappointment caused by the severance of my connection with the 86 St. Center I immediately turned to a new undertaking. I thought over the plan I had in mind last year of establishing a Zionist synagogue; but, recalling the difficulties I then encountered in the matter of the ritual and of an accessible place to worship in I have tried to plan something wherein these two difficulties would not exist. This led me to formulate the idea of a Zionist Beth Hamidrash. I spoke to a few of my friends about this new plan and called them to a meeting at the Y.M.H.A. building last night to discuss it and to have them form an organization for the purpose of furthering it. The following were present: 1) I. Cohen, 2) Dr. E. D.

Friedman, 3) Mrs. E. Epstein, 45) Mr. & Mrs. Moe Epstein, 6) J.H.Rubin 7) Max Rubin, 8) Cecil Rusky, 9) Miss Jessie Sampter, 10) Miss Guggenheimer, 11) Milton Rubin, 14) B. Bernstein, 13) Max Kadushin, 14) Baroway, 15) Rabbi Robison, 16) Sylvan Robison, 17) Seidenberg, 18) Greenberg, 19) Dr. Dushkin, 20) Miss Friedlaender, 21) Gitelson, 22) Trachman, 23) Weilerstein, 24) Chipkin, 25) Langh, 26) Miss Kadushin, 27) Sussman, 28) Miss Crohn, 29) Aronson, 30) Lakushok. In explaining the plan to them I made the following points:

I.1.The normal human being requires spiritual communion. 2. In all ages the need for that was satisfied through worship. 3. When the Jews lost their temple they maintained their spiritual life by democratizing and adapting worship to the new conditions in which they found themsleves. This gave rise to the synagogue which has fulfilled its purpose throughout the centuries.

II. 1. Nowadays, however, the synagogue is no longer functioning. Only about 20000 Jews worship in synagogues in Greater New York on an ordinary Sabbath. 2. This is due to the fact that the economic situation prevents the keeping of the Sabbath. 3. Which situation has prevented the synagogue from being democratic and modern.

III. We must therefore make use of another element in Jewish life as a means of spiritual communion, namely Torah. Just as in ancient times we overcame the predicament of unprecedented conditions by democratizing and adapting worship (תפלה) we should now democratize and modernize Torah (תורה).

IV. We should propagate the idea that God can be worshipped no less if not more through Torah than through liturgical prayers. Torah should come to be regarded as a sacrament. By studying for an hour a week we can enter into communion with Israel and Israel's God. To carry out this purpose it would be necessary to form study groups to be guided by various helps and syllabi in the study of Bible, Rabbinic Literature, Mussar, Jewish History, Hebrew, etc. etc.

In addition to the work which each one would do by himself with some group all those affiliated with the movement would assemble once a week, preferably on Sunday mornings, to listen to a lecture on some subject of spiritual interest presented from the Jewish point of view. There would also be an opportunity to do constructive ethical thinking and planning along Jewish lines, thus combining the aim of the ethical culture society with the background of the Jewish spirit.

After considerable discussion the gathering went on record as favoring the ideaof a Zionist Beth Hamidrash.

* * *

Friday, April 5, 1918

I am meandering once more. My relation to the community of the Jewish Center is again the same as what it was before I fell out with J.H.Cohen. Kauvar came to the city on Thursday, March 7. He came to see me that same day and Cohen also came to meet him at my house. I cannot say that I was particularly happy over the fact that I felt myself being superseded in the leadership of the new institution, yet I had sense enough not to take myself too seriously and ~~to~~ by considering the unpleasantness I was experiencing as martyrdom. In fact I would like to forget the pettiness and the vacillation of which I feel I have been guilty these last weeks. My only object in recording the unmanly attitude which I have been taking is that I may have the more reason to rejoice later when I shall have at last found myself.

Kauvar spoke at the Center on Saturday, March 9. I thought that from the standpoint of the people whom he addressed, the sermon was very good. He was eloquent and emotional; at one time he even moved the people to tears. Despite that, the few men who are running the Center, viz. Cohen, Fischman, Phillips, etc. failed to be captivated. Whether they arrived at an unfavorable conclusion independently of each other or caught the clue from Cohen who at once pronounced the

sermon a disappointment I do not know. Whichever it was, they decided that Kauvar was not the man for them. As soon as they were through with him they began to inveigle me again. The synagogue was on the point of completion and my participation in the dedication exercises was beyond question. Right after the dedication came the Passover week and of course I was expected to preach. So from not having anything to do with the Center I preached seven times in eleven days. The sermons were well received. The only one that formed an exception was the dedication address delivered on Sunday, March 24. It was as one of the members, Arthur Lamport was gracious enough to tell me, pedantic. This was enough to give me a day's fit of depression. I was certainly not thrown into a better humor when Cohen told me a day or two afterwards that Ike Phillips didn't like me, because my sermons were too long and I spoke over the heads of the people. He didn't think I was the man for them. Cohen, however, wanted to convince him to the contrary and he expects that at the dinner which is to be given to Phillips next Monday (April 8) in recognition of the services he rendered as member of the building committee, Phillips will warm up to me. I don't know whether to laugh or to weep.

On Sunday, March 10 I attended a house dinner given at the Seminary. The affair as usual was quite stiff and formal and so far as I can see the only effect it had was to irritate most of the students who otherwise are quite contented with the Seminary. Adler, Schiff and Marshall spoke. Marshall as is usual with him broke out into a patriotic harangue in which he found fault with the studnets for doing nothing for their country. He did not say exactly what they could do, but he took them to task anyhow. I was called upon to speak and in my remarks I took occasion to point out that the students were very eager to serve their country if they would only be given an opportunity. These gatherings, I said, should be utilized to create a confidence in

in ourselves and in our calling which at present does not enjoy the reputation of being indispensable to society. Lack of confidence ~~in~~ in the calling is responsible for the tendency of the rabbi to apply himself to all sorts of tasks except that for which he has been trained. His case is similar to that of the old fashioned barber who in the old country would attend to wounds, prescribe medicines and cup patients. One such barber was called in to a patient who was seriously ill. When he looked at the patient he saw that he could do nothing for him. "I am sorry I can do nothing for you," said the barber. "Do what you can"replied the patient. Thereupon the barber tried out all his experience in the way of cupping him, massaging him, cutting his hair and similar performances.

The students were very grateful to me for having taken their part against what they considered an unmerited attack. In general the students regard me as their president. Mr. Krueger expressed it: "as an older brother instead of merely as a member of the faculty." Both my work with them and my relation towards them have afforded me more happiness than any of the other activities in which I am engaged.

The Beth Hamidrash idea has been developing. Two meetings have taken place subsequent to the opening one described above, one on Sunday, March 17 and the other on March 31, at the Y.M.H.A. building. It is only at the last meeting that it took definite and concrete shape. I had felt all along that the intellectual and spiritual element was not sufficient to keep any group together ~~permanently~~ permanently unless one could give his entire time and thought to the carrying out of the idea. I felt, however, that I could not think of devoting myself entirely to that work. I therefore came to the conclusion that the idea would have to be institutionalized, i.e., the people who would be in a position to maintain and disseminate the ideal of Jewish study as a sacramental act would themselves have to be held together by common

social interests. In other words, they no less than the community of the Jewish Center are in need of a center where they could develop a common social artistic and intellectual interest -- a kind of club, except that with them the ultimate purpose of such intercourse would never be lost sight of, but made the basis of their principal activities.

On Thursday night March 21 I addressed a group of about twenty to twenty five young people at the Menorah rooms, 600 Madison Ave. on the Zionist Beth Hamidrash. They were very much interested in the proposition and fifteen gave in their names as desirous of joining the movement.

On Friday, March 22 at 2 P.M. I addressed the class of young men who had taken the two weeks course to do the Jewish welfare work in the camps. Myremarks consisted of a presentation of my point of view as to the essential element in Judaism being the Jewish people with its unique social mind. There were about twelve of them, rather mature and prompous. They seemed to respond readily to the point of view, even the two rabbis (Levinger and) both of them Cincinnati graduates. One man expressed himself to the effect that if he had been given that point of view five years ago he would have devoted himself entirely to Jewish work.

* * * *

Tuesday, April 9, 1918

On Saturday night I attended the debate which ~~it~~ took place between students of the Institute and those of Gratz College. It was the first of its kind. I was delighted to see with what ability they debated the question, Resolved that volunteer teaching in religious schools be encouraged. The task of securing judges for the debate devolved upon me and it was only with great difficulty that I managed to get Rabbi Robison, Isaac Cohen and Abe Rothstein. I was called upon by Miss Permissohn the president of the students organization to say a few words.

At the same time that the debate was being held here, the same question was being debated in Philadelphia by two teams, one from Teachers Institute and the other from Gratz College. The Institute teams won in both places although they took the opposite sides of the question.

I confess that every time I come into touch with the students and with their work I feel guilty of negligence and lack of concentration. What could not have been done with them if I were to have devoted my entire time and attention to them.!

On Sunday night I was present at a Hooverized supper held in the Central Jewish Institute by the directors of whom I am supposed to be one, though I have never attended any of their meetings. I described myself that night as a "stationery director". The purpose of the ~~gathering~~ gathering was to discuss ways and means whereby the directors themselves might derive advantage from the institution. This is certainly an unusual attitude and a healthful sign. It shows that there are still some Jews of means who are interested in Judaism, and although they are but a handful they might under proper leadership render Judaism fashionable. The suggestions made by the speakers dealt with the need for Jewish kindergarten work, religious classes for the children of the directors and instruction for the adults. My own remarks dealt with the last point.

Last night I attended the testimonial dinner given in honor of I.L. Phillips the vice-chairman of the building committee whom his brother nicknamed "Hit-the-trail Ike." I feel so blase about all these affairs that I cannot summon the patience to describe them in the manner I should like to do. The triviality and shallowness of the social life among that class of Jews is so wearying that I feel as though all the spirit has oozed out of me on account of the time I have been wasting in their company.

At noon today I was present at an Executive Committee meeting of the Y.M.H.A. As a rule very little seems to be accomplished at these luncheon meetings except to furnish the directors with a sumptuous meal. Once in a while the subject for the discussion has more than local interest. This was the case today when the question came up whether the Y.M.H.A. should send representatives to the Kehillah assembly of the Yorkville district. Judge Lehman who presided pointed out that the Kehillah idea was on the whole both impracticable and untenable and that it was impossible to support the movement without compromising one's Americanism by reason of Magnes' attitude towards the war. He loved Magnes, he said, only next to his own brothers and acknowledged him as his spiritual guide by folliwng him from Temple Emanuel to Bnai Jeshurun but he certainly could not endorse his pacifist policy. Magnes has put his best friends in a very embarassing position. Would he invite Magnes to his house? someone asked him. He replied that he certainly would, but he would not want to have any strangers present so as not to have to explain.

Dr. Shulman was also present at the meeting and between him and Lehman the Kehillah idea was torn to shreds. I put in a weak defense, but in my heart I never could see what there was to this wild goose chase for unity based upon no particular purpose or principle. In a lengthy discussion that I afterwards had with Schulman we agreed that there is room for an organization of Jews, reform, orthodox and cultural, on the basis of some clearly outlined platform.

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Tuesday, April 16, 1918

At the meeting of the Beth Hamidrash group which took place last ~~Saturday~~ Sunday at the Central Jewish Institute there were more people present than at any of the preceding meetings, due probably to the fact that this time notices had been sent out. The discussion

which centered about the question of name, now that the term Zionist Beth Hamidrash has been declared somewhat barbarous, brought out the division of opinion as to whether the aim should be that of launching a general movement to reinstate the Torah in Jewish life or to found a club for those who do not find themselves spiritually at home in any of the existing Jewish institutions. I contended that we were primarily concerned in the larger aim, but in order that its realization be assured it was necessary to have a Center which should hold together the organization by other means besides the principal aim. In order that the larger purpose be not lost sight of I suggested that we organize ourselves as a Society for Jewish Culture. The very term, I argued, would suggest that our movement is analogous to that of for Ethical Culture, thereby perhaps, offseting in time the danger of assimilation which is being furthered by the latter.

Quite a number, however, objected to the term culture as being offensive. As I think of it now, it also appears to me to be too highbrow and cold, lacking that religious warmth which I should like to see restored through Torah. We arrived at no definite decision that night.

There was a bit of impatience displayed by one named Segal at the slowness with which we were moving. Although a poet himself, if his "Pain Struggle" may be called poetry, he was for immediate action. I did not like his attitude, particularly as it appeared to me that he was not interested in the larger implications and aims, but was mainly concerned in establishing a kind of club for the few intelligenzia. There was certainly lacking the religious keynote in his advocacy of the movement.

With this undertaking still in its chrysalis state, I have already launched something of a cognate nature. When Dr. Schulman and I parted last week after a long discussion in the lobby of the building where the Y.M.H.A. luncheons take Took place, we agreed to meet again to continue the discussion as to the possibility of uniting the different

elements in Jewry on a spiritual basis. I went to
his ~~house~~ home. I got there four o'clock. He was
hungering for some one on whom to vent his
and twenty five minutes he kept on talking to me
once in ithe 45 minutes to ask my pardon for
say anything. He repeated to me a sermon he had
Sabbath on the text of [illegible] point he digressed into kindred
veloped in a number of previous sermons. This
out germane to the purpose of my visit which
the basis of [illegible] it was now time for
That is to say, the orthodox should have a
reform one of their own, but both organizations
joined together for such purposes as they
such purpose was the observance of the Sabbath
the cowardice of our Jewish lay leaders in
legislation as contrasted with the self
Day Baptists. When he took Marshal to
bill to be passed at Albany, Marshal replied
stirring up anti Jewish sentiment. A
would be [illegible] the strengthening
that was notably lacking in most of us.

When at last I was given by
pointed out it was nothing less than
and the reformed congregation could
roof although it might be possible to
ticular object as thatof Sabbath observance
could be fostered by means of
counter to all experience which has
ties themselves radiant with faith

I then described to him briefly my conception of Torah as a possible basis for Jewish unity. It was the same idea as I developed before the group of young people that I have been meeting bi- weekly. He caught the idea at once, and while I was explaining it to him he formulated the name of the organization that might be founded with that as a basis. He suggested the name Jewish Religious Union for the Study of the Torah.

When he asked me for suggestions as to the mode of procedure, I suggested that we go slowly at first, calling in at first only a few people of standing in the community and getting their view of the feasibility of the plan. The following names were drawn up by us in addition to ours: J. H. Cohen, Vogelstein, Judge Lehman, Dr. Keller, Miss Szold and Mrs. Oscar Straus. The meeting is to take place in the rooms of the Seminary on Wednesday, May 1st at 8 P.M.

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Sunday, April 21, 1918

Last night Judge Rosalsky and Mr. Abraham Rothstein, who were appointed by the newly elected trustees of the Jewish Center as a committee to offer me the rabbinate, came to see me. While it had been generally assumed that I was to be the rabbi, this was the first time that a formal invitation was extended to me. It looks as though I have to make up my mind once and for all. I can by no means say that I am sorry that the state of uncertainty in which I have been living the last year or two will now finally and definitely come to an end.

The interview lasted between 9:30 and 12:30. No terms were mentioned. The length of the interview was due to Judge Rosalsky's long winded and circuitous method of speaking with now and then a tendency to give, as does Dr. Schulman, resumés of speeches delivered on different occasions. I noted that he had quite a large vocabulary but that his grammar creaked. He is certainly a well meaning man.

Despite his lack of general culture he is well versed in his own specialty as judge on the criminal bench. In the thirteen years that he has been sitting on the bench his decisions were appealed from 125 times and only in three cases were his decisions reveresed, two of these reversals being on his own recommendation. He is a typical product of Jewish life on the East Side twenty and thirty years ago. His father was one of the foremost kosher butchers in Allen Street, of the kind that took up that business because they possessed the asset of Jewish learning and respectability. The judge's parents were known as very hospitable and generous and these are the traits he seems to have inherited.

Rothstein whom I have had occasion to describe before, chimed in with all that the judge said,and added with great emphasis that if they had not been sure that I was going to accept the office of rabbi, they would not have gone on with the building; for they had been in a pinch more than once, and at one time had even contemplated selling the lots and it was only because they looked forward to my leadership that they persevered. Despite the fact that I cannot imagine a man like Rothstein speaking in hyperboles I cannot help discounting this statement of his.

With his quiet way of speaking and rather loud laugh he strikes off now and then some very clever remarks. "There are two kinds of Christians," he said, "bad and good. The bad Christians hate a Jew, the good ones don't like him." In speaking of the Center he said something that outclasses anything I have said about it. According to him the purpose of the Jewish Center is to render the environment safe for Judaism. Finding myself thus outdone by a layman I had to make my own contribution and amend his description by suggesting the word "democracy" in place of "the environment.

I was very much touched at one point in the conversation when he made the statement that the great regret of his life was that there

was no such center fifteen years ago, because I knew that he referred to the unJewishness of his family.

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Saturday night, April 27, 1918

Last Monday night I was elected rabbi of the Jewish Center.

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Tuesday, May 7, 1918

The present structure of the Center contains only three stories covered over by a temporary roof. The other six stories which are to contain gymnasium, swimming pool, classrooms and club rooms could be put up at a cost of $150,000. The entire purpose of the Center, which is that of illustrating how Judaism can be lived to some extent as a civilization instead of merely as a religion, would be frustrated if those other stories should remain unbuilt. But, unfortunately, the majority of those who could afford the money to put up the rest of the structure are not at all in earnest about the entire undertaking. They have been talked into joining the Center much against their will. J. H. Cohen was irresistible. If he were in a position to advance a large amount towards the $150,000 there would be no question that he could talk them into doing the same, but bereft of that substantial way of backing up his arguments he is like a Samson with his hair cut off.

I have been goading him on, however, not to allow the others to rest on their oars. An informal meeting took place last Saturday afternoon with the purpose especially of getting Arthur Lamport who was recently appointed treasurer, sufficiently interested to help in the raising of the necessary funds.

I am not sufficiently acquainted with Arthur Lamport to be sure that my estimate of him is a correct one. He is a youngish looking man of about 40, of medium height (I learned later that he was only about 34), well featured, small beard. His eyes and hair are dark and

and he always wears a self-satisfied expression that breaks out into an artificially polite smile when he greets you. He comes from a strictly orthodox home. His father Nathan Lamport is the son of a quite noted rabbi in the old country, and is himself not a stranger in Talmudic lore. But as to ethics, pharisee in its worst sense, is the term. It is that yellow streak which is discernible in Arthur, not that he assumes any piety, but one can note it in the tortuous sophistry to which he resorts to gain his point. Arthur recieved a college education and naturally he could not help observing that the life and ideals in his father's home did not at first sight seem to harmonize with what he learned at college. But not being of a sufficiently spiritual nature to want to know which represents the true view of life he has been content to remain a double personality in the world at large, a man of the world totally indifferent to Jewish problems and ideas, and in the little Jewish circle of his family and synagogue acquaintances, a standpatter delighting in his father's antics interested in maintaining Judaism as an exotic growth due perhaps to a desire, not altogether conscious, that as an exotic it is sure to be gotten rid off much sooner than if any care were taken to prune it and adapt it to the new climate in which it is at present.

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Wednesday, May 8, 1918

Although the Saturday afternoon meeting was called primarily with the view of winning Lamport's whole-hearted interest in the Center he failed to keep his appointment. Rosalsky, Cohen and I discussed the problem of the Center. Various names were mentioned in connection with the raising of the additional sum required. Among them was that of the Weinsteins. They are among the biggest cloak manufacturers in the country. Their father who may be seen walking about with the proud mien of a Lord Salisbury, does not apparently want to be reminded by his old friends of the days when "matchmaking" was his chief source of income.

How little influence he exerted or cared to exert over his children may be inferred from the fact that one of them said recently to Cohen that for twenty years he had not attended a synagogue except on the High Holydays. At a meeting held recently in their house for the purpose of collecting funds for Home of the Daughters of Jacob he expressed himself to the effect that he has been coining money so fast that he does not know what to do with it. They are evidently desirous now to buy "standing" in the community, for one of them resented that they are not represented on the newly elected Board of Trustees of the Jewish Center. When, upon seeing how unwilling A. Lamport is to taking an active part in the work, I asked Cohen why he had not favored having one of the Weinsteins instead, he replied "In the case of Lamport there is at least respectable background, and if his interest can be gained it will be an asset, whereas in the other case the vulgarity is immeasurable."

With all of Cohen's faith in his power to transform the most unpromising human material into useful and public spirited men he seems to despair of the Weinsteins altogether. He narrated an incident about one of them which accounts for the view that he takes of them.

Thursday, May 9, 1918

He told how one of the Weinsteins came to the Superintendent of the Beth Israel Hospital and insisted upon having a nephew of his, whose way through college he had paid, placed immediately upon the staff." I must have my way and nobody is going to stop me,"was his reply to the suggestion that the appointment can not take place without the regular mode of procedure.

In the course of the discussion at the Saturday afternoon meeting I.L. Phillips who had been the de facto chairman of the building committee of the Center strayed in. He is one of J.H. Cohen's products. Before Phillips was taken inhand by him money making constituted his sole aim in life. Cohen's principal training school is the directorate of the Beth Israel Hospital. This time he tried to enlarge

the scope of some of his disciples through the Jewish Center. But he is encountering far greater difficulty than he had anticipated. In the case of Phillips it seemed for a time as though he was successful when a reaction set in. Phillips was rather zealous in seeing through the present part of the structure. Cohen, expecting that formal recognition by the members of Phillips' efforts would stimulate Phillips to complete the building, suggested that a testimonial dinner and loving cup be awarded to him. Instead of having the desired effect, this act of recognition made no impression upon him, and now he is as cdd and indifferent to the entire undertaking as he was before he went into it.

The attitude towards Judaism and Jewish life reflected in the following conversation is typical of the attitude of the successful middle class Jew of today.

Cohen: Suppose I were to come to you with the suggestion that five or six men extend to the Center a loan of $100,000 without interest for a year and with no other security than the increased membership and the fact that upon the present part of the structure about $200,000 has been paid off with comparatively little trouble, what would be your reply?

Phillips: It all depends what mood you would find the man in. If he would be in unusually good spirits he would probably see no difficulty in raising the required amount and might himself do something to help it along. But if his mind should be upset by some trouble real or imaginary you will not get a ~~kixx~~ bloomin' cent out of him. To give you an instance how difficult it is to say what one may be up against, this morning at 12:15 when I came from synagogue, I was called to the telephone by some one who introduced himself as Major somebody and who said that he wanted to see me at once on some government matter at Hotel Biltmore. I rushed down at once. I found there a representative of the War Industry Board (?). He told me of a plan to supervise the

placement of government orders for garments etc. This supervision was to be conducted by a committee of business men from different parts of the country. New York was to be represented by two men of whom I was to be one. I began explaining that I could not neglect my business; but he would not listen and before I was aware I was impressed into the service which will involve not only my giving up all my time, but also contributing to the expense of renting and running the office.

As he narrated the account of his meeting with the Major, a smile of satisfaction played about his features. One could see that at heart he was glad that he was entrusted with a responsible task.

Again Cohen plied him with questions.

Cohen: Granting that I found the man in a receptive mood, suppose I were to draw a picture of what the Center could do if it were finished, do you think I would experience any difficulty in getting him to contribute towards the loan?

Phillips: Who can tell? Not all people have the same kind of interests. Suppose you conceive a scheme of saving sick horses. If you come to one who is interested in sick horses you can get the necessary money from him.

Cohen and the major, Israel and America are making a bid for Phillips. Can there be any doubt who will win?

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Monday, July 22, 1918

My installation as rabbi was supposed to take place on Friday, the 2nd day of Shabuoth (May 16?). Engraved invitations were printed for the occasion, but I held them back just as they were about to be sent out because I was not sure in my own mind whether I was ready to commit myself to the rabbinate of the Center. When the second day of Shabuoth came I delivered a sermon in which I accepted the leadership offered me but not unconditionally, In pointing out that it was the

function of the Center to make Democracy safe for Judaism, I added that it could only function in that way if it were to have the additional six stories which they had planned for. Those other stories were the motor. I could not be expected to pilot the new social mechanism with the motor left out.

Not long after I received a check of $1000 in an envelope which bore the imprint of Lamport's firm. It was evidently in payment of two months' salary for April and May. My relation to the Center being of the uncertain character which can be gathered from the above account as well as from that recorded in different parts of this book I have refused to accept any salary from them. Great as is the temptation as well as the pressure brought to bear on me by my folks the feeling has been growing on me that my spiritual development would stop if I were to take the money. I could not be true to myself. I would feel morally cramped, and once I would feel that way all my spiritual strength would be gone. My plan is to have the Center devote the greater part of the yearly amount that they had intended giving me, toward the defrayal of scholarships in the Teachers Institute. I consider the maintenance of Jewish life impossible without well trained teachers, and I am convinced that it is impossible to produce such teachers without supporting the students who are qualified to pursue a training course. What greater satisfaction could I have than to feel that I am defraying as it were, the cost of the Jewish training of twenty of thirty young men and women who can become centers of Jewish influence? Whereas if I were to pocket the salary myself it would mean that I would become the slave of a higher standard of living or at best save up another fifty thousand dollars in the course of the next ten years. Besides, I am convinced that unless those who are at the helm of Jewish life display something of the spirit of sacrifice that now permeates the nations of the world, the Jewish people has no chance of survival. Should I not